















LETTERS  
OF A  
CONFEDERATE OFFICER  
TO  
HIS FAMILY IN EUROPE  
DURING  
THE LAST YEAR OF THE WAR  
OF SECESSION

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

**I**N introducing these Letters to the few friends by whom they will be read, it is unnecessary to say that they were written in the heat of conflict, and in the fullness of that patriotic ardour and enthusiasm which distinguished the southern man in support of the cause loved and lost.



## EDITOR'S PREFACE

**A**MONG all the literature of the War of the Rebellion, we recall but two items which were published in Europe; both, obviously, from the Southern side.

The first of these we have already republished in our **EXTRA** No. 13, the "Right Flanker", and we now offer our subscribers the second: "Letters of a Confederate Officer to his family in Europe during the last year of the War of Secession."

So rare is the original that but the one copy from which we make our own, has turned up in many years: and this one was bought by the Library of Congress last May. It was issued from "Neal's English Library, Paris," and was doubtless privately printed in a very small edition, for the author's immediate friends—hence it is unknown to the general public.

Its picture of the South in 1864 is of great interest. The letters the author wrote and received were all carried by blockade-runners, and as some of these were probably captured, this accounts for the gaps in the series.

The author's name we ascertained, after making search in every direction in the South, was Richard W. Corbin, a son of a Southern family long settled in Paris.



## LETTERS OF A CONFEDERATE OFFICER

59 RUE DE VARENNES,  
FEBRUARY 9TH, 1864.

My Dear Mother:

I was so painfully conscious of the grief you would experience when apprised of that which I am about to break to you now, that I tried to postpone the moment as long as possible of communicating what will be the subject of this letter. But the time has now come for me to procrastinate no longer, and to execute the saddest part of a determination fixed, final and irrevocable. This determination which I am resolved to carry out with little delay, is to make an attempt to get into the South, and when there to act as it becomes a man who wishes to earn the respect of his countrymen. It is not by frittering and dreaming away the best years of my life that I can expect to win that esteem, without which I feel I would be eternally miserable. Were my sensibilities dead, my conscience silent, this frivolous, good-for-nothing mode of existence would most likely suit me very well; but thank God I have not so far lost all self-respect as to hesitate any longer between the pleasures of Capua and the exigencies of what I consider to be my duty. What that is I think I am at an age to appreciate, and therefore my mind is made up.

My dearest mother, you must not take up the erroneous idea that all this is a mere freak, a transient ebullition of martial enthusiasm, which will simmer down and not be heard of in a few days. Disabuse yourself of that notion, I entreat you, for never yet have I been more inflexibly determined to carry out a resolve than I have been for the past three or four months. This plan, you see, is not the result of caprice, or of feverish impatience, but on the contrary the ripened fruit of mature reflection. Ah, how often have I tried to argue myself by the most ingenious casuistry into



the conviction that after all this cowardly inactivity was right and proper; but my conscience was not to be beguiled by such sophistry.

Sometimes I would try to suppress my inward yearning and by an air of levity and insouciance lead you to believe that I was content—yes, even in these stern times, with an horizon bounded by the Bois de Boulogne and the Jockey Club. But after these efforts I found that my aspirations to be up and doing only grew more and more ardent. You know too well that I am not so preposterously infatuated with myself as to imagine that I am compounded of very heroic materials, and consequently you will not tax me with inordinate conceit when I say that I feel I am fitted for higher things than a lounge on the Boulevards. My future happiness depends upon this step. If I don't shake off this dull sloth, my life will for evermore be embittered by the most galling and humiliating regrets. Having opened my heart to you I feel that you love me too much to impede a project so essential to my happiness. Just think that if you have now any affection for your idle, useless son, how much more that affection will be enhanced if it is mingled with a little pride at his manliness. I feel some hopes that if my pen lacks the eloquence, at any rate it is not deficient in the earnestness necessary to secure your approval for this enterprise. With it I shall set out rejoicing, without it I shall nevertheless persevere, although the load upon my heart will be a grievous one. I ought to have said all this at La Boulaye but the fact is I had not the heart to give you this additional pain just before separating. You have ere this learnt that the sad event which we all dreaded has just taken place, and that Madame de Paris is no more. It was this morning that she departed this life. Jean, unfortunately, was not present when death overtook her, having returned for some refreshment; but he was aware that her dissolution was inevitable, for Trousseau\* told him that the poor sufferer could not live through the day. All this is so sad that I

\*Dr. Trousseau the celebrated French physician.

have not the courage to prolong this letter; and so, with my fond love to dear Bella, who I hope is in a fair way of recovery, I embrace you with all my heart.

Your devoted son,

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LONDON, APRIL 14TH, 1864.

My dear Mother:

Bessie deserves a heap of thanks for her delicious little note, and I hope you will tell her how grateful I am for it. I am happy to say that her assurances touching the passport difficulty have been verified, for, after demurring a little, the French Consul granted my request on the strength of the shooting license, which came very opportunely; and now, with this valuable document in my possession I am to all intents and purposes a *Johnny Crapaud*, and can snap my fingers at all Yankeedom. Pray thank Henry on my account, for all the trouble, although ineffectually, which he has given himself on my behalf. If I can't thank him for the deed, I do so most heartily for the will. Our passage over was very smooth, they say, but I knew nothing of it, as I began to snooze long before the boat left the wharf. We had some pleasant companions, amongst whom was Lawley. He told us that he was going out to Dixie on or about the 20th, in a small private vessel, the *Nassau*. I have pretty nearly got through all my work here, and therefore we shall start for Liverpool tomorrow, in order to have a good chat with Tom, who has secured my berth. I am going out with a magnificent outfit: Cook's clothes are capital, and he has obligingly undertaken to procure all the military accessories I shall require. This is a great advantage, as I get a reduction of fifteen to twenty per cent. on every article he purchases for me. Besides the two *cadeaux* you got for me, we have purchased three woollen cloaks, three woollen shawls and some other articles which I shall distribute amongst my kith and kin when I reach the sunny S. I shall

write to you from Liverpool in order to report my first impressions of the ship. In the meanwhile, adieu. With best love to the dear ones around you.

I tenderly embrace you.

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STEAMER *Europa*, OFF QUEENSTOWN,

APRIL 17TH, 1864.

My dear little Mother:

We have just come in sight of the coast of Green Erin, and in a few moments I expect I shall be lying off Queenstown; I therefore avail myself of this temporary stop to tip you a few lines.

We left Liverpool yesterday at two P. M., the hour of our departure having been postponed from eight in the morning to that time on account of a change in the steamer. The *Arabia*, which was advertised to start yesterday, was unable to be ready in time, having just arrived from Boston when we left. It appears that she encountered some rough weather coming over, and was thereby considerably retarded: in fact all the steamers are overdue, amongst them the *City of Washington*, which we have just met. By her signals she informed us that she had been no less than three weeks and a half coming from New York. So far we are experiencing most delightful weather, and I trust that old Neptune's fury is spent by this time, and that he will not give us much annoyance. I cannot say that I am favourably impressed with the *Europa*; she is the oldest ship on the line, and consequently is deficient in the comforts and appliances of more modern vessels. They call her the tortoise of the line! I only hope she will make up for her extreme slowness by excessive safety. She is a very old friend of my father's, who was, you remember, on board of her when she ran into the *Charles Bartlett*. My travelling companion Captain Averell, is a trump; his manners are quiet, unassuming and gentlemanly; in this respect I am lucky. At Queenstown we expect

another Confederate; that will be jolly, for then we can defy the Yankee element, which is sadly preponderant. There are some sombre-visaged "down-Easters" who look Bowie knives at us, but we treat them with ineffable scorn. We are slackening speed, and in a few moments we shall come to a full stop—that must perforce be the case with this scrawl, and so adieu until Halifax.

Your devoted son,

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HALIFAX HOTEL, HALIFAX,  
APRIL 30TH, 1864.

My dear Mother:

I have this instant landed, and true to my promise I lose no time in announcing to you the safe arrival of your rebellious son in Halifax. But to my great disgust I find that the outward-bound steamer calling at this port has left. I shall have therefore to send these lines to New York, from whence there is no means of forwarding them to you before Wednesday next. I fully counted upon our hitting the aforesaid steamer when I started, but man proposes and [the Atlantic] disposes, for instead of getting in on Tuesday, as we might have done had the *Europa* been a boat of average speed, and had we also been favoured with ordinary fair weather, the welcome sound of "Land ahead" only gladdened our ears this morning at eight A. M. From the moment our poor old tub steamed away from Queenstown until within two days of our arrival, she had to contend with head winds, head seas—altogether the weather was as bad as it could be, in fact such a stirring up of the vasty deep at this season of the year has not been seen within the memory of that superannuated salt yclept the oldest mariner. The *Europa* indulged in a succession of saltatory eccentricities very unbecoming in one so aged; when so engaged I can only compare her to an oceanic *Rigolboche*. To give you an idea of the knocking and tumbling about we had to endure, I will merely say that for ten days consecutively I never sat down to dinner without



having a plate of soup deposited in my lap, or without being bowled out of my seat with a ponderous joint, which would every now and then break loose from its moorings and come thumping along like the most formidable of Druid's rams. But notwithstanding all these difficulties my appetite being exceedingly wolfish, I hardly missed a meal. Being rather a jolly, devil-may-care lot, we got to look upon the showering down of glasses and cruet-stands upon our heads as exhilarating little incidents. After our achievements in the feeding line I almost think I could cook and eat an omelette on the tight rope, *a la* Blondin. I think I told you in my scrawl from Queenstown that I was not prepossessed with the looks of most of my fellow-passengers; but I have had reason to alter my past impression of them, and to satisfy myself of the truth of the adage that appearances are deceptive. With a few exceptions the individuals whom I thought to be Yankees, turned out to be Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers; than whom no people are more sympathetic or kindly disposed towards the South. Judging from their twang, and also from the cut of their jibs you might almost fancy them to be unmitigated Down-Easters; but just get them on the great South question, and you will soon find that they are a hundred times more friendly than either the English or Canadians.

*En route* I made the acquaintance of a very pleasant and gentlemanly Virginian, who was on his way over to this port in order to take command of the famous blockade runner, the *City of Petersburg*, which is now refitting here. Mr. Cameron (that is his name) has kindly invited us to go down with him to Bermuda in his splendid craft; an offer which Captain Averell and myself accepted most readily, seeing that the *Alpha* is a very slow and small boat, and that she was crowded with an unwashed set of passengers, and laden down to the water's edge with cattle. The *City of Petersburg* on the contrary merely carries out a supply of coal. She is one of the fastest Clyde built-boats. They tell me she averages a rate of fifteen and a half to sixteen knots an hour. This speed will enable



us to run round the Yankees, should they chivy us. Our sleeping accommodations on board of her will be infinitely better than in the *Europa*, and as to the cooking it will be unexceptionable, I am sure, judging from a sample which we have had of it at luncheon. The captain thought on arriving here that we would be able to get off this afternoon, but it appears that owing to extensive repairs required by the engines, we shall not be able to start before Tuesday. This delay does not distress me much, as it will enable me to purchase sundry articles much needed by the Confederates; and moreover time will not hang heavily on our hands, for thanks to the kindness of some hospitable citizens, I am sure that we shall live upon the fat of the land. Tomorrow we are going on a grand fishing expedition in the neighborhood, where we are promised great sport. Our cicerone tells us that the other day he caught in three hours twenty-seven trout, ranging from one pound to eight pounds. I wish Jean were to participate in the fun. When we came alongside the wharf we saw no less than four blockade-runners lying in different parts of the harbour, and amongst them the notorious *A. D. Vance*, or "Advance" as the sailors call her. She has been marvelously successful hitherto, having made as many as eight round trips between Bermuda and Wilmington. I have just spoken to her purser, who estimates the profits realized by her at fifteen hundred thousand dollars in gold. It did our hearts good to hear the lusty cheers with which the crew and passengers of the *Europa* responded to the salutation of this little Secesh flotilla as we steamed past it. The captain and officers did not attempt to restrain this manifestation of good feeling, for they are capital fellows and don't disguise their sympathies for our noble cause. I had just got thus far when, to my ineffable horror, Averell came in to tell me that this letter cannot possibly get away in time for the New York steamer. My letter will therefore have to wait for the Boston boat of the 10th instant.

I must now allude to a melancholy incident which happened

just as the *Europa* was getting under weigh. Some of the Boston-bound passengers had gone ashore, and when the signal gun was fired they were hurrying aboard. A nice young Scotchman, whom I had often spoken to during the voyage, was ascending the plank after shaking hands with me, when by some accident it tilted over and he nearly fell into the water. A Custom House officer who was standing on the wharf by my side seized hold of his coat collar, and I grasped one of his arms just as he was sinking. By this assistance we saved him from being mangled by the paddle-wheel of the steamer, but alas, we could not pull him up fast enough to rescue one of his legs, which was crushed into a jelly between the paddle-box and one of the posts of the wharf. Just picture to yourself the horror of the sight when my eyes fell upon his mutilated limb. He was instantly taken to the hotel, the best surgeon in this city was called in, who immediately amputated his poor leg below the knee. He bore the operation nobly: I did not hear him utter a groan, but big tears trickled down his cheeks as the surgeon was performing his bloody task. He had come out on a pleasure trip, and was on his way to the Western States. What a sad mishap for him at this distance from his friends. As he was quite alone and friendless, Averell, a ship companion and myself take it by turns to watch over him and to minister to his wants. My "watch" is coming on in a few minutes, and so I shall have to pull up. I don't know what he will do without us when we are obliged to go, as he does not know a soul in this place who takes the slightest interest in him. I am endeavouring to get a nurse for him, but with little success so far. One of the doctors has come in to tell me that gangrene has set in, and that his case is very dangerous and in fact that two days will decide it. Horrible, horrible, indeed.

I must now say good-bye to you, not however without sending my fondest love to my excellent father and to all the dear ones around you.

Your devoted son,

P. S.—I address this to Isabella.

HAMILTON HOTEL,  
HAMILTON, BERMUDA  
MAY 11TH, 1864.

My dear Father:

At Halifax, as I was folding up the letter in which I gave that dear little mother an account of my trip from the "tight little island" to the black shores of Nova Scotia, I could not help muttering deep imprecations against the adverse winds that retarded the progress of the venerable but alas, not rapid *Europa*. I was then savagely ignorant of the golden opportunity which presented itself most unexpectedly, and which enabled me to despatch the missive in question a fortnight earlier than I had allowed myself to reckon on. I heard by accident that the steamer *A. D. Vance* was about to go to England on the sly, for repairs. The moment the welcome intelligence fell upon my ear I rushed in mad haste to her wharf, but she had slipped her moorings when I got there, and had already begun to steam off. However I was not to be discouraged by that mischance, and so I forthwith chartered a boat, and after an hour of superhuman exertions I managed to get alongside of her, and in the most touching accents I implored the first mate to mail my letter as soon as he reached England; this he agreed to do. If she does not fall foul of a Yankee cruiser you will receive these lines; but if the Fates decree otherwise, my "kakography" will be consigned to the flames, or in the deep bosom of the ocean buried. We were detained in Halifax until last Friday by a series of vexatious impediments. Our captain had originally intended to put to sea at least on Monday evening, but at the last moment he was apprised of a plot hatched by the rascally Yankee Consul for the purpose of capturing the *City of Petersburg*. It appears that this bright-minded official had been tampering for sometime with the chief engineer and a portion of the crew, and had succeeded in bribing them by a combination of worthless greenbacks\* and bad whiskey. But

\*The author does not seem to have had personal knowledge of the value of Secretary Chase's famous first issue of National currency.—[ED.]

fortunately our skipper got wind of these machinations, and incontinently packed off the traitors. The present engineer is a good Southern man and thoroughly competent, but it took him a long time to get the engines (which had been probably put out of gear), again into working order. We were chased by a Federal steamer on leaving Halifax, but luckily we had sound men in the engine-room, and by piling on plenty of steam our good ship ran cleverly away from the Yankees. Our voyage hither was not marked by any very noteworthy incidents, except on the morning of the last day, when, a few minutes after sunrise, we espied a big man-of-war steering athwart our course. We fully expected to be peppered with shell and solid shot every minute. This rather uncomfortable state of suspense lasted for what I thought a little eternity; but to our intense relief the man on the lookout at the masthead informed us that she was a British frigate. I drew a long breath and as the visions of Fort Lafayette, green pork, with "Beast" Butler in the background gradually vanished, I felt, like falling down and worshipping the Union Jack. We put into Hamilton, a beautiful little seaport, situated on the gem of this lovely group of islands. The group consists of no less than three hundred and sixty-five islands of every imaginable shape and size, and all within a pistol-shot of one another; but some of them are so small that it is by mere courtesy they can be dignified with the name of islands.

Nature must have been in one of her gayest moods when she decorated this coral reef, for at every step one comes upon a charming view, or upon some sweetly scented plant which would turn the heads of all the Parisian perfumers. The horticultural resources of this place are immense, and if the lazy negroes who constitute three-fourths of the population would only assist Nature a little, in consideration of the immeasurable riches she has so bountifully showered upon them, I am sure that the vegetables of the "vexed Bermoothes" would beat all creation. By the way, I protest



indignantly against the injury which the immortal "Swan" did to these gay and sparkling islands by making them the local habitation of that horrid old monster *Caliban*. They came into the world with the best auspices, but like many of Nature's spoilt children they have missed their vocation, and instead of becoming the abode of Dryads and Fairies a swarm of the ugliest and "meanest" darkies ever shipped from the coast of Africa have settled down here like a blight. Before the emancipation the Estates here were very productive, but soon after the manumission of the slaves these lands receded from cultivation, and now they yield literally nothing at all. With the exception of some very fine vegetables, all that is consumed, whether in the shape of eatables or drinkables, is imported.

A Bermudian was telling me this morning that it is impossible to get any work out of these rascally niggers as he contemptuously termed them. They are both indolent and insolent, and unless pinched with hunger they scornfully refuse the easiest employment. This blockade business suits them to a T for they get very liberal pay for the small jobs it necessitates, and after loading and unloading the steamers that may chance to dribble in, you will see them basking in the sun for hours and hours, like torpid alligators. I think the most rabid of Exeter Hall Ranters would confess that free black labour is a mad Utopia and that it is incompatible with thrift and industry. But distance lends enchantment to the view, and with some three thousand miles of salt water between them and their colonies these fanatics fancy they have conferred a great blessing on the negro race, whilst in fact their ill-timed philanthropy has proved the curse of the blacks and the ruin of the whites.

It is really too bad to see the munificent gifts of Heaven squandered away because these benighted wretches are too slow to turn them to account; and yet Bermuda is said to be hardly a fair criterion of the system. In Barbados and the other West India islands it is infinitely worse, for there Sambo has reached



the lowest pitch of demoralization. My Bermudan friend tells me that had it not been for this war the white population would have decreased, but as soon as this abnormal state of things is over, the decrease will go on afresh. He is confident that ultimately the descendants of Ham are to remain masters of the islands, and then it will not be long before they relapse into barbarism and fetichism. The deduction I draw from all this is that there is a good time coming for Bermuda, and that ere a century elapses cannibalism will be one of the prominent features of the place. Oh Wilberforce, you were an unmitigated humbug!

The two principal ports are St. George and Hamilton, but St. George is the more important business place of the two, and it is there that the blockade interest is concentrated; but I stopped here because the accommodation is better. I think it is likely I shall have to remain here for a week longer, for no steamer will venture out before the next moon. I am rather glad of that, for what with fishing, cruising and bathing I shall manage to kill the time pleasantly enough; however, as this missive is going in a vessel sailing for England in a few days, I shall tip you a line just before embarking, in order to tell you what steamer is to take me on to Dixie; for the present I am entirely in the dark as to that. The blockade-runners of late have not been so unfortunate, and I am in hopes that the blockading squadron off Wilmington, having been terribly scared by the sortie of a Confederate ironclad, will not hug the shore so close as it has done hitherto.

Captain Maffit<sup>1</sup> is expecting a very fast boat from England, and it is upon the cards that I may go in under his auspices.

The latest news from Dixie is of a satisfactory nature with the exception of one item, which speaks of the wound of Longstreet. It is said that he is very severely wounded, but we have not been able to make out whether his life is despaired of. Burnside has

<sup>1</sup> John N. Maffit (1819-1886) originally an officer in the Navy, entered the service of the Confederacy in 1861, and commanded the "Florida."

been forced back with tremendous loss, and it appears that Grant has been pretty roughly handled on the Rappahannock. These advantages, coupled with the surrender of Plymouth and Banks' rout, show that Fortune has not quite deserted our good cause. Sanguine people here think that the war will come to a close this summer. They tell me that I have arrived just in time to be too late. These prophecies will give you some comfort perhaps, and I jot them down for what they are worth; but I confess they are very galling to my martial ambition. I have been obliged to put off all my winter clothing and to don the thinnest raiment I could fork out of my trunks. It is really very warm, and yet the heat is so delightfully tempered by the moisture of the Gulf stream, and the atmosphere is so delightfully impregnated with the perfumes of thousands on thousands of fragrant plants growing in rank luxuriance, that even with my strong dislike to very hot weather I cannot help enjoying this balmy climate. Under its influence I feel that I would very quickly become a regular lazzarone, and go in for nothing but the dolce far niente. I hear that the *Florida* has just arrived and that the natives of course are rushing off to see her, so as I have reached the foot of my twelfth and last page, I think I shall follow the crowd, and bid you adieu with a heap of kisses to my dearest mother and to all the good folks at home. Believe me, dearest father, Your devoted son,

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STEAMSHIP *Lilian*,  
ST. GEORGE'S HARBOUR, BERMUDA,  
JUNE 1ST, 1864.

Dear Father:

"Patience is bitter, but its fruits are sweet." Never has the truth of that saying been more fully exemplified than in my case; for after a few weeks of vexatious detention in the vexed Bermoothes, I had the ineffable pleasure of receiving your welcome missive enclosing those affectionate lines from Mother, Bessie and

Jean, just as I was on the verge of sailing hence for the land of cotton. You will be not a little surprised that at this late date I am still vegetating on this island, and you will take up the idea that like the whining schoolboy, I am creeping unwillingly to the Southern school of adversity. It is not my fault, but the cause of all this delay was the moon, whose indiscreet rays have betrayed many an ill-starred boat into the hands of *Messieurs les Yankees*.

We blockade-runners are a terrible unpoetic race of people, for the "Queen of the Night" is our bugbear, and instead of making odes to her like sentimental loons, we heap imprecations upon her of a decidedly profane nature. But at last the nights are pronounced to be dark enough for the timid crafts that nestle under the folds of the Union Jack to venture on their illicit errands. "Jove Juvante," I shall be off tomorrow in the crack ship *Lilian*, commanded by Captain Maffit. It was a toss-up whether I should pop into Dixie on board of the *City of Petersburg*, when she left on the 12th ultimo, or whether I should remain here until the present moon. I was strongly advised not to do the former, as the risks of capture would be very great, from the fact that most probably the moon would be shining brightly when she got off Wilmington. I abandoned that plan, and most luckily, for steamers just in from the south report that my friend the *City of Petersburg* has not been heard of, and the belief is spreading here that she has been nabbed by Lincoln's cruisers.

This is a painful conjecture, for Averell is on board of her. Nothing could shake his resolve of going in on her, and I fear that he is paying the penalty of stubbornness in some Northern Bastile. I have every reason to congratulate myself upon my decision of running the gauntlet under Maffit's auspices, for in addition to his courage, experience and general company, I shall have the advantage of enjoying the society of Lawley, Mr. Bowers, and Vizetelly, the correspondent of the *Illustrated London News*, who are all three booked for the *Lilian*. She is considered by competent judges here

to be the finest boat of the kind which has yet been seen in this harbour. Her speed is said to be second to none, and as far as her commander is concerned, he is the best by far of all the officers engaged in the blockade; for he knows every inch of the North Carolina coast, and he has given up "splicing the main brace." Taking all these auspicious circumstances into consideration, I arrive at the conclusion that we must and shall get in; but there is many a slip between the cup and the lip, and therefore, *par le temps qui court*, it does not do to be too sanguine. The company to which this steamer belongs is connected with the State of Georgia, and through the instrumentality of Major Walker, the agent for the war department at this *depot*, I might have got a free passage in her; but then I could only have got this as a conscript. Now I have no wish of being considered as such, my action being entirely voluntary. I have therefore decided, in order to be as free and untrammelled as possible, to pay for my passage. The fare, considering the distance, is very high, but then I shall be quite independent, a position I consider worthy of a pecuniary sacrifice.

The charge is £30, but as the disbursement of that sum would make a considerable hole in my finances, I have drawn upon you for the amount, provided you do not object to pay a draft for that amount—if so, I suppose I can meet the liability with what money we have in the Confederacy. Of course the Yankee telegrams have undertaken to prove to the European public that the Federal armies have carried everything before them in Virginia, and that the rebellion is on its last legs. At the first flush those accounts seem very appalling, but divesting them of all their bounce and exaggeration, we here gather from them that the irresistible Grant has done very little during the past three weeks save lose seventy thousand men to advance five miles. According to the laws of arithmetical progression, at that rate the Army of the Potomac would be reduced to a corporal's guard before it reached the for-



tifications of the Southern Capital, even admitting that it consists of four hundred thousand men. Cool and long-headed men here, after comparing the reports of the Southern Generals with those of the Yankees, have come to the conclusion that the balance of advantages is on our side; and I can assure you that these blockade people are very matter-of-fact and dispassionate. I don't know where they may have been before they came here, but certain it is that now they are as free from fanaticism as any neutral I have seen. If I imagined they represented Southern feeling I would long ago have come to the conclusion that Confederates are a very impassive, apathetic race. It is wonderful how refrigerating the manipulation of dollars and cents is.

A gentleman here showed me a letter dated Richmond, the 24th, from a friend of his who is said to be a sagacious observer of events; well, the view he takes of the late fights is the reverse of despondent. I have lately made the acquaintance of the famous Colonel St. Leger Grenfell, who was for a long time Bragg's inspector-general of cavalry, and after that, chief of Morgan's staff. He is the man Fremantle speaks of in his book.<sup>2</sup> You remember he says this bellicose John Bull is a great talker; but that he is one of the rare instances where tall talking is commensurate with great deeds. The fact is, his life has been one long series of adventures and hair-breadth escapes, and I don't think there is a part of the world where he has not figured more or less prominently. This roving spirit has just left the Confederacy on account of a difference which has occurred between him and the President about John Morgan, who it appears is no favorite of the administration. I don't think this is his only motive for leaving Dixie, and I have taken up the notion that he conceives that he has not received promotion adequate to his services, or that he is jealous of Polignac, who has just been appointed Major General. Anyhow, I got on very well with the Dugald Dalgetty in question, and he gave me

<sup>2</sup> Three months in the Southern States, by Lieut.-Col. W. H. Freemantle, an officer of the British Army.



some very good letters of introduction to some southern officers, and to Morgan in particular, who is evidently much attached to him, judging from the exalted certificate he has given to him, and which I had occasion to read. Mr. Bowns will give me the box you mention, in a few minutes: I anticipate great pleasure in opening it. I am delighted to hear that you have sent me my field-glass: it will be most acceptable, as I had begun long ago to appreciate the full extent of my forgetfulness. As to the epistolary envoy, I have never had such a treat, and as Maffit has just remarked, if I devour these tidings with such tremendous avidity after a separation of a few weeks, what shall I do when months and perhaps years intervene? I am jotting off these lines on board the *Lilian*, and when I began writing I was under the impression that we would get under weigh tomorrow; but I have been informed that in order to "muddle" the Yankees as much as possible, we shall leave in a couple of hours. For that purpose they are getting up steam in desperate haste. The hissing and boiling water causes the boat to quiver and vibrate in the most distressing manner to a man intending to write. If this scrawl is more than usually badly written I must plead extenuating circumstances, for if dancing on a volcano is a ticklish pastime, caligraphy on board a blockade runner is an utter impossibility. I had hoped that I could chat with you a little longer, but alas they tell me I must fold this up without further delay. With the help of God, my next will be from Wilmington or Richmond. Until then adieu to all the dear folks at home.

Your devoted son,

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WILMINGTON, C.(ONFEDERATE S.(TATES)

JUNE 5TH, 1864.

My dear Mother:

*Veni, Vici*, and as Julius Caesar remarked, we have gone in and won. Thank Heaven, I am at last on Confederate soil, having most successfully passed through that awful ordeal yecept the

blockade. There have been so many captures of late among the blockade-running squadron, that I have every reason fervently to bless my stars at having reached this haven of refuge, sound in wind and limb. I wrote to you a few minutes before sailing that the dear little *Lilian* was getting up steam for Dixie, We steamed out of St. George at six o'clock on Wednesday afternoon.

Amongst our live freight, or our live-stock—as the captain facetiously called your offspring and his travelling companions—were the amiable and accomplished correspondent of the “Thunderer,” and a most amusing and jovial *bon-vivant* rejoicing in the name of Vizetelly, who came here on a mission from the *Illustrated London News*. It is his intention to draw what he sees by field and flood, for the special amusement and edification of those indifferent John Bulls. I trust that he will be the occasion of sending to his paper the sketch of many a Yankee stampede. But to return to our muttons, in addition to these Britishers were three Confederate officers belonging to the army of the west, and who had recently effected their escape from Fort Chase. This, for a boat whose everything is sacrificed to speed and freight-carrying capacity, was an awfully big lot of passengers: so much so that there was no accommodation, in the European sense of the word, for us. In fact at night, if the weather was at all fine, we would have to shift for ourselves on the quarter-deck; if it was at all squally we pigged together on the floor of our small dining room, or in amongst the cargo.

You would have taken us without doubt for some of Lee's ragamuffins, had you witnessed our going condition when we disembarked this morning to report at the commanding general's head-quarters. My clothes were so weather-stained and seedy, my physiognomy was so thickly besmeared with a vile coating, composed of salt water and coal dust, that it required the closest observation and very keen powers of discrimination to distinguish

this child from the very blackest of firemen. *Mais à la guerre comme à la guerre*, and I assure you we're a very jolly albeit a very dirty set.

From the start until Friday evening everything was going on as merrily as a marriage bell. We were rolling off with ease our fourteen knots, or about twenty-four kilometres an hour. No Yanky was visible in the horizon, and it was the captain's intention, had we been able to keep this speed, to rush through the blockade on Saturday morning before sunrise.

We would have to grope our way about the coast until we saw the Cape Fear lighthouse—for, as is often the case in the Gulf Stream, the sky was cloudy at noon, and old Sol's countenance very indistinct; consequently an accurate observation was out of the question. As it turned out, we would have struck the coast twenty-five miles south of the entrance of the harbour, had we stuck to the same course, but a portion of our engines became so terribly heated that we were obliged to slow them. In that condition the captain thought that his boat was not fit that night for a dash through the fleet. He therefore determined to turn back and go out some sixty miles to sea, and there stop the ship. As there was no more excitement in store for us that night, I went to sleep on the deck. When I awoke next morning I found the *Lilian* going all round the compass, performing what the sailors call circular navigation.

To beguile the tedium of that species of navigation we devised all sorts of pastimes, and amongst them sea-bathing. Two of the Confederate officers jumped in, and just as I was preparing to follow suit one of the sailors shouted out that he saw a shark. In presence of such an enemy the rebels skedaddled in Bull Run style and hastily clambered up the sides of the boat. In a second after, a huge shark made his appearance. He was evidently awfully hungry, for he swam round the ship several times in quest of what

I think would not constitute a very first-class repast even for a shark; for after six months' incarceration in a Yankee dungeon a Southerner can scarcely be considered a very dainty morsel. The search proving fruitless, he gave his tail a flirt suggestive of intense disgust, and made himself scarce. This little incident had fluttered us a little, and we were gradually regaining our composure when the hand at the masthead sang out "Sail ho". All our glasses came into play, and after a time we discovered a large steamer straight ahead of us, that is to say between us and Wilmington. The only thing to be done was to put about and steam away from the fellow in the direction of Bermuda. He was bearing down upon us as fast as he could go, and at first seemed to be gaining upon us, but as the *Lilian* settled down earnestly into her working she flew through the water, and then it was evident that the pace was too much for the cruiser; she however, pegged away after us with all the dogged tenacity characteristic of the Yankee race.

When we no longer saw her, Maffit, after a little dodging, steered back in the direction of Dixie. It was then that I became convinced that his reputation as a consummate navigator was deserved, for notwithstanding all the zigzagging and doubling which we had to execute in order to elude our pursuer he brought the *Lilian*, soon after sunset, within a distance of some twelve miles off the coast and at the exact point when the steering of the ship devolved upon the pilot. We stood till nine o'clock, and then the pilot gave the order to go at full speed.

It was, I will confess, a very anxious moment, and with the exception of Maffit, who is the perfection of coolness and self-possession, and the pilot, we all looked rather nervous. As we were passing through the outer cordon of blockaders, I fancied like the Irishman that I could hear the palpitation of my heart a great many yards. They did not see, and so far we were unmolested. This gave us some confidence, and yet the hardest part



was to come, for the Yankee squadron comprising the inner semi-circle, lies close to the bar, and the distance between each ship hardly averages half a mile. Whilst we were tearing along flashes of lightning now and then illuminated a dense bank of clouds ahead of us. These we took at first to be the ominous precursors of a shell or solid shot. There was of course a good deal of what the Southerners call "flickering", that is to say, bobbing and dodging of heads. Just as we were about to go over the bar we passed within a biscuit throw of what seemed to be a floating monster on our starboard side. We every moment expected a broadside, but the Yankees were napping and thanks to God we gave them the go-by. This last danger being past a frantic shaking of hands ensued, and everybody congratulated everybody else. Whilst we were all crowding on the bridge the pilot told us to look out for a volley, as one of the enemy's launches was close to us. We all fell flat upon our faces; and whilst I was in the act of doing so I saw the boat, dropping astern of us. She appeared to be filled with armed men, and I fully expected they would pepper us with Minie bullets, but fortunately they did not take any heed of us.

Our surmise for thus escaping is that she took the *Lilian* for a Federal gunboat. Maffit now tells me that he fully expected a very warm reception; instead of which not a gun was fired at us; he is of the opinion that the vessels which ran out on the same night as we ran in must have drawn off the attention of the enemy. Without such a diversion it is impossible to understand their want of vigilance. The *Florse*, which came in a couple of hours after us had not our luck, for she received a *feu d'enfer*, but without doing any injury to her except to one of her smokestacks. I have just heard that one of the steamers which attempted to run in that night was sunk by the Yankees. I am most comfortably installed here, at the house of Mr. Colley, an owner of blockade ships, who lives in very good style indeed for the times. I esteem myself very fortunate at not being obliged to put up at the hotel, the filth

and nastiness of which baffles description. Here I have pleasant company, Lawley, who is decidedly a very pleasant person, being one of Mr. Colley's guests; a cuisine which in normal times would be pronounced very fair, and, what is very hard to be procured in the Confederacy, immaculate sheets.

This is a strange prelude, is it not, to the hardships which I have been led to expect when I undertook my journey; but this is no criterion of the poverty and the hardships in the South, for if any place in the Confederacy is at all thriving it ought to be Wilmington, which has the monopoly of the blockade business. Tomorrow morning I start with Lawley for Richmond, as I am anxious what the real position of military affairs is, and that is the only point where any prompt and reliable intelligence can be procured. All the people I have spoken to express sanguine hopes in General Lee's gallant army, and his ability to hold the capital against Grant's forces, which are rapidly being decimated by this succession of frightful slaughters, as well as by disease. They don't look for a complete rout like that at Bull Run or Fredericksburg, but they think it probable that Grant will have to desist from sheer exhaustion.

Lee's army having been heavily reinforced, is stronger than it was at the commencement of the last campaign. General Whitney\* puts down the whole of our losses at twelve thousand men, which is a small number compared with the carnage among the Yankees. I made that officer's acquaintance on landing, and was most favourably impressed by his quiet, modest manners. He commands this department and is looked upon as a very able general. He won, you remember, great distinction in the Peninsula, by his dashing conduct at the head of one of the crack divisions. He considers the military position as promising, but deplores the death of Jenkins, whom he looked upon as a splendid officer. Stewart† is

\* This was undoubtedly General W. H. C. Whiting, the defender of Fort Fisher.

† "Jeb" Stuart.

greatly regretted, but I perceive he has greater prestige in Europe than in the Confederacy, where his military talent is rather disputed. If General Read's wound is mortal his loss will be the greatest loss of all, for he is regarded as a man of extraordinary ability.

The *City of Petersburg* was not wrecked after all; I found her lying near the wharf as we came in; she is going out tomorrow and will take this letter. I shall write to you as soon as I get to Richmond, and with many thanks to you and all for the glorious batch of letters handed to me by Mr. Ward, I fondly embrace you.

THE BALLARD HOUSE, RICHMOND,

JUNE 10TH, 1864.

My Dear Father:

My journey hither was certainly not one of bewildering rapidity, and yet I can hardly realize the fact that I am within the walls of the beleaguered capital of dear Dixie. It seems as it were an ugly dream that after all the comforts and frivolities of a luxurious life I should be surrounded by the stern realities of a hideous war. Yes, here I am in the hotbed of treason, which for the nonce is converted into a vast hospital for the accommodation of the wounded in the last battles in the vicinity. Almost at every step my gaze is met by the sight of trains of poor fellows maimed and mutilated by the brutal mercenaries of the North. Such is the pitch of callousness to which men and women have arrived here, after witnessing for three bloody years all the horrors of war, that now they eye these miserable objects with apparent indifference. This indifference does not arise, I am sure, from any dullness of sensibility; these people have shown too often by their acts of devotion how good their hearts are, for me to suspect that their feelings are at all dead. No, I think that as they are prepared for the same fate, that it comes from a wish not to render themselves miserable by an exhibition of compassion which would be of no use to the objects of



it. I have been struck very forcibly by the sense of security which seems to prevail here among all classes. The dangers which environ this city, the chief aim of Yankee malignity, are very great. Grant, at the head of his mighty force, is only some fifteen miles off; and yet such is the unbounded confidence of the people in Lee and his noble army, that you hear them talking not only of driving the enemy back, but gobbling him up. So far, all the charges of the Yankees have been repulsed with frightful slaughter and with comparatively little loss to the Southerners, who are now for the first time fighting from behind breastworks. I had last night a few moments' conversation with a colonel who had just arrived from the front. He told me that without any sort of exaggeration the enemy lost, in front of a brigade of Georgians, no less than six hundred men killed and about three thousand wounded, whilst the Georgians are only minus four men since that fight. It is thought that Grant is going to cross the Chickahominy, and that he will follow in McClellan's footsteps towards Richmond, if he does not attempt to cross over to the southern bank of the James River; but there the gallant Beauregard waits him with the splendid army which gave Butler so sound a drubbing the other day. Everything indicates that this is the supreme effort of the North to crush out the South. Never has their fighting been characterized by such desperation and recklessness. Their battalions have been repeatedly hurled against the Southern breastworks with unwonted impetuosity and dash, but each time they have reeled back in disorder and cut to pieces. I have not spoken to a single soldier here who was not convinced that the Yankee courage in the recent battles has been screwed up by means of the strongest whiskey. One of them who was slightly wounded in one of those engagements told me that some of the Yankees were so drunk when they charged that they could hardly stand upon their legs, and that they would roll harmlessly into the entrenchments, and there allow themselves to be disarmed. In some cases they were so mad with liquor that

they would throw away their muskets and run into the cannon's mouth. Nothing is too bad for these miscreants in Washington. They now cap the climax by hurrying their own men into eternity when beastly drunk. Horrible, horrible. I hope that the missive in which I gave my dear mother an account of our successful trip through the blockaders will reach her. I confided it to the care of the purser of the *City of Petersburg*, requesting him to mail it as soon as he got to Bermuda. It was a great relief to find this old friend of mine lying alongside the wharf at Wilmington, for I had some time before feared that she had been pounced upon by the Yankees. She was seen attempting to run in, and was therefore obliged to put back with a pack of cruisers at her heels. They chevied her right into Nassau. There she remained for a few days in order to get a supply of coal, and then she popped in, not however without getting a shower of shot and canister. Captain Averell, whom I have had the pleasure of meeting, tells me that they had a mighty hot time of it; it almost reminded him of Seven Pines. I trust that she will get to Bermuda safely, and as she is a very fast boat there is a chance the more in her favour; but the Federals have now so many fast cruisers lurking about the two cordons of blockaders, that I consider running out fully as risky as running in. Although we managed to elude the enemy with perfect impunity, I do not look upon the blockade as child's play; in my opinion it is awfully ticklish work trying to get through it. To do so successfully, speed coupled with skillful seamanship is absolutely requisite. These two indispensable qualities I found in the *Lilian*. I fear she will lose her able commander, Captain Maffit, who I judge is the best of fellows and the most skillful of navigators; for his return here has been hailed with delight, and the Secretary of the Navy has given him a practical proof of it by pouncing upon him with an important command just at the time when poor Maffit wanted to make a little money in blockade running; but as I tell him, such are the drawbacks to a too exalted reputation.

This will cause the light-heeled *Lilian* to go down terribly in the betting. I left Wilmington on Tuesday with Lawley, who has stopped there a day in order to pen a communication to the "Thunderer" in which he recorded his impressions in the *grandes emotions* which I shared with him. He gave it to me to read, and I can vouch for its being graphic as well as truthful; we were not a little loath, both of us, to leave the hospitable and comfortable residence of Mr. Colby, which is like an oasis in the desert of privation. It required no little force of will to give up all these luxuries and face the filth, tediousness and thousand discomforts of our Southern railroads.

Fortunately I stumbled on Mr. John Robinson, the son of Mr. Robinson of Philadelphia, who is now military superintendent of that line. He gave us permission to camp in the baggage car, a favour which we appreciated very highly, I assure you, for with our rugs we could lie down amongst the baggage. Our couches were not of the downiest, it is true, but anything is preferable in these times to the cars, which are densely packed with soldiers rushing to the front. After half an hour's experience of them I was able fully to realize the horrors of the Black Hole of Calcutta.

Our car was wedged in between two others containing ammunition; very unpleasant neighbors at all times, but more so with an engine which throws out a regular *feu d'artifice* of sparks. To make matters worse a terrific storm occurred, which became so violent that the train had to be stopped. The flood-gates of Heaven were opened to their widest extent. Never have I seen rain pour down with such fury; each drop seemed large enough to fill a bucket; the artillery of the gods, too, blazed and thundered forth in deafening peals. I saw the lightning, like an immense ball of fire, descend and fell a large tree. Remembering that I was sandwiched between these two very unpleasant cars, I felt inclined to observe the first part of Cromwell's apothegm, but slightly to modify the other part

of it\* We passed through to the west of Petersburg, a district which had been the scene of the Yankee raid ordered by Butler, and when he was so handsomely repulsed by Beauregard. For miles and miles along the track the cowardly depredators had left behind them marks of their passage—the charred remains of once cosy cottages, the ruins of farmhouses, were visible in sad succession. I have been here only a few hours, and I have heard of more atrocities committed by these Vandals than I could attempt to narrate in the space of twenty sheets.

The advance of the Northern horse has been marked by more acts of wanton Vandalism than hitherto. Some counties have been entirely devastated, and among them I fear that Caroline county has been a heavy sufferer. I hear that a gentleman's house situated there was stripped of all its furniture, decorations and food. Some valuable rosewood tables and chairs were smashed into atoms and then turned into breastworks. These accounts make me very anxious to learn the fate of my uncle's estate; for that purpose I shall make enquiries not only respecting him, but also about the other members of our family.

In my next letter I shall communicate what facts I shall have been able to gather; this I shall do as promptly as possible. In future I intend writing very frequently, as that is, I think, the only way in these disjointed times of informing you of the state of my health and of my whereabouts. So far my health is all that can be desired. I have taken up my quarters at the Ballard House (Old Exchange) I here share a tolerably comfortable room with a Captain Wright, of Alabama, who plants on the same river as Lygon.

He was a fellow-passenger of mine in the *Lilian*, having just escaped from a Yankee prison to Bermuda. As he will pass on his way home through Montgomery, I shall entrust the present for my

\*Put your trust in God, but keep your powder dry.



dear Aunt Randolph to his care. The prices here, owing to depression of the currency, are absurdly high. For instance, I pay three dollars for a couple of eggs, eight for a beefsteak, and fifteen for a small chicken. This is appalling at first if you don't bear in mind that the proportion of gold to paper is about one to seventeen. The late financial measure, however, has raised the value of paper, for now seventeen Confederate notes will buy a gold dollar, whilst a year ago twenty-seven would not do that—so you see there is an improvement, and I am told it is going on gradually—so much the better. Write very often yourself, and I beseech you to tell mother, Bella and Bessie to do the same. With this species of stimulant I know that my spirits will never be depressed.

Farewell. Your devoted son,

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My last letter was dated Wilmington, 6th.

P. S.—I got here not one minute too soon, for a Yankee raiding party stopped the train which followed the one I was in, took the passengers prisoners, and after burning the cars and turning up some of the rails, returned to Norfolk with their captives. A little more and I was in the clutches of Beast Butler. This is what the people here call escaping by the skin of one's teeth.

BALLARD HOUSE RICHMOND,

JUNE 15TH, 1864.

My dear Father:

In my last week's letter to you I told you that I purposed making enquiries about our kinsfolk in Dixie in order to give a report which I know you are most anxiously expecting. I have at length been able to glean the following facts, partly from Mrs. Lewis, and partly from your nephew, Nicholas C., who has just arrived here from the Reed's, after running innumerable perils in getting through the enemy's lines. The Yankees, during their



occupation of Caroline County, burned and destroyed private property in their wonted barbarous style; but strange to say, although my uncle's neighbours were subjected to every sort of cruelty and indignity, yet he was treated with comparative clemency for the scoundrels contented themselves with carrying off some of his horses and oxen and with shooting those they could not take away; but they did not insult Aunt Virginia or my cousin Anna Munford, who were staying at the Reed's when Burnside's corps camped in its vicinity. Soldiers were constantly lounging into the house, but except upon the larder and the store-room, which they most effectually cleared out, they did not commit any other depredations.

Some of the negroes were induced to leave the farm, but the majority preferred remaining. Nicholas tells me that notwithstanding the presence of the enemy, they were perfectly civil and subordinate. All labour however is stopped by order of the Federals, who threaten to shoot the darkies if they do any work in the fields. Nicholas was stopping at the old homestead when the army of Grant marched through the county, and in order to avoid capture he had to conceal himself in the woods in the daytime. At night he had to creep cautiously into the house. The negroes offered him all the assistance in their power, and when asked whether he was on the place or lurking in the neighborhood, they pretended not to know what had become of him, notwithstanding the most awful threats if they were caught hiding the truth. My cousin finding this state of things unbearable, started, after taking leave of the inmates of the Reeds', for Richmond—a most hazardous undertaking. From the moment of his departure to the time he reached the fortifications of the city, five days and nights elapsed. During the journey he was frequently shot at by the Yankees, who took him for a bushwhacker. At one time they actually got within one hundred yards of him, and then blazed away—but happily without hurting him. His privations, poor fellow, were very great,

for he had only a scanty supply of bread with which to quiet the cravings of hunger; but like the immense majority of Southern people he bore these hardships cheerfully, and having got his discharge he prosecuted his studies in medicine, and now he occupies a position as surgeon in one of the hospitals appropriated to the Yankee wounded. Every one is in good health, I am glad to hear, at the Reed's.

Aunt Virginia, notwithstanding the propinquity of the Yankees, was doing very well. Your brother John is in Montgomery. Having succeeded in selling his Virginia farm he has bought a pleasant little place in that pleasant town, and is now engaged in superintending the cotton purchased by the government. The berth is said to be a good one. His eldest son occupies the post of quartermaster in a brigade of Longstreet's corps. He has the reputation of being a very efficient officer. His brother Lygon, who has no vocation for the military profession, is employed in the treasury department. My uncle Lygon has not left his plantation since the war broke out; the reports concerning him are satisfactory. Your sister Anna's sons, whom you expressed so much solicitude about, have both been providentially saved. The eldest one was taken prisoner at Fort Donelson, but after a few months' imprisonment he got his exchange and re-entered the army, I think in the capacity of an adjutant. Frank Randolph is now a Major in the cavalry, having distinguished himself on various occasions.

Ever since the beginning of the war he has been in the thickest of the fights. He received his last promotion after a brilliant cavalry charge. I expect that if his career is not cut short he will shortly be appointed to a colonelcy, for he is regarded as one of the most promising officers in the service.

So far the tidings I have communicated are not so bad for these sanguinary times.

We have of late been amused at the jubilant tone of the Northern press, which tries to make out that all Grant's movements hitherto have been great successes, where Lee has foiled him everywhere. It is clear that the disastrous repulses he has met within the Wilderness and Spottsylvania have compelled him to modify his programme, which was to march straight through the Confederate lines down to the city; instead of which his progress has been of a sidelong nature, and attended with the most awful carnage of the war.

His present point of attack might have been reached almost without firing a gun, and yet after butting his head unsuccessfully against the Confederate positions a number of times, and after losing seventy thousand men in the attempt to carry them, he claims a series of victories. Reports come in frequently that the Yankees are very much disheartened by the frightful slaughter in their ranks. It is even said that Grant has no little trouble in bringing them up to the scratch; but we will be able to estimate their demoralization in the next battle.

There is no sign of anything of the sort in the Confederate army—that I can vouch for; I have visited the different corps and have come to the conclusion that Lee cannot be whipped, for never have his troops been in better heart and spirits. They are roughly clad, it is true, but their clothing is better than it ever was and they have never been as well-shod since the war commenced. There are provisions in the army in this city which can be made to last seven months. The soldiers now, compared to that which they have had to endure hitherto, are bountifully supplied; they get full rations, have coffee and sugar, luxuries which up to the present time they had not often indulged in.

Some of the brigades are so abundantly provided for that they have frequently given their rations to the poor of the city, amongst whom there is really a great deal of suffering owing to the exorbi-

tant prices of food, caused by the proximity of Grant's army, and also by the cutting up of the railroads; but it is hoped that this pressure is only temporary.

I wish that some of the faint-hearted *soi-disant* Confederates, who no doubt think that the South is at its last gasp, could be transplanted here at the stroke of a magic wand. They would then see sights which indicate anything but fear or despondency.

There is no noise or agitation in the streets. The citizens pursue their daily avocations without evincing any signs of terror. The ladies in the evening sit on the doorsteps of their houses and there chat cheerfully, whilst their fingers are busily engaged in knitting or sewing for the soldiers. Were not the stillness of this doomed city broken at intervals by the distant booming of cannon, you would really little suspect that twenty millions of Yankees had concentrated all their fiendish ingenuity on its destruction. Although not hardened to these emotions like inhabitants, I have been infected by contagion of their serene confidence, and now if at all solicitous it is more about affairs in Georgia than about the fate of Richmond.

I have written to Mr. Hodgson and to Mr. Cowper, but I fear owing to the irregularity of postal communication that I shall not for a long time get answers from them. Nothing has been received from you, or from the dear folks at home, since I have landed in rebeldom.

With love to you all I fondly embrace you.

Your devoted son,

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RICHMOND, JUNE 26TH, 1864.

My dear Mother:

More than three weeks have elapsed since I first set foot on the shores of Dixie, and yet, notwithstanding the most diligent enquiries



I have not heard of the arrival of a missive from you or any of my beloved correspondents. I don't, however, give myself up to despair, and I am buoyed up with the hope that when they do come they will come "not as single spies, but in battalions". I ought not, however, to be surprised at this long interval in our correspondence, for to the risks and uncertainties of the blockade must be super-added the dislocation of postal communication caused to Richmond by the enemy.

The Yankees have taken a leaf out of Morgan's and poor Stewart's book, and are now displaying more dash than we gave them credit for, in the shape of raid-making. They prowl about the vicinity, tear up the railroad tracks, cut telegraph wires, to the intense disgust of the post-office officials; so you see than even after arriving in the Confederacy letters are a very long time in reaching their destination. As an instance of this postal irregularity; I wrote to Mr. Cowper and to Mr. Hodgson immediately after landing, and yet I have not received any answer from either of those gentlemen. The only thing to be done is to peg away in the hope that out of a mass of missives one may perchance be received. This is what I am doing, but alas so far with little success.

Sheridan and his vile gang of plunderers, after a succession of discomfitures have at length been whipped out of the Peninsula, where they have perpetrated the most fiendish atrocities, and now, after a sound drubbing administered to them by Hampton, they are cowering demoralized and panic-stricken, under the protection of their gunboats. When Nicholas C—ran the gauntlet of the Federal pickets, as I related in my last letter to Father, Caroline County was occupied by Grant's army, and the poor old family homestead was hemmed in on all sides by the Federals, who pillaged and destroyed all the private residences within their reach.

Up to the time of his departure they had not molested any of the inmates of the Reed's or stolen anything from the interior of



the house; but to my inexpressible sorrow I have just heard that the comparative immunity of my poor uncle was of short duration; for when Grant, after that "overwhelming victory" of Cold Harbour, was obliged to resume his triumphant but crab-like march to Richmond, he was followed by Sheridan's shattered command, who revenged themselves on the defenceless women and children for the hard blows of the Virginian cavalry dealt them. Maddened by repeated defeats they entered the Reed's and proceeded to take all they could lay their hands on. They carried off or tore up most of the clothes that were to be found, and not content with robbing my uncle Robert, aunt Virginia and cousin Anne of all they had, the ruffians actually laid violent hands on the food and money belonging to the slaves. This is their new system of forcing the negroes, for having found the poor creatures loath to leave their masters they now destroy all their provisions, in the hope that the fear of starvation would make them follow the invaders. Some of the servants at the Reeds were induced by the threats and lying representations of the Yankees to run away, but the majority of them stubbornly declined to abandon their homes. I am constrained by decency from attempting to narrate all the abominable outrages which many unfortunate women have been the victims of in this last campaign. Outrages so horrible that we ought to blush now at the thought of having lived in amity and under the same government with such fiends incarnate.

Four of these Vandals entered the house of a gentleman in King William County. He was away at the time, but his wife and daughter had not had time to effect their escape. They were immediately seized upon and every species of brutal indignity was offered them. Their shrieks were happily heard by some of the negroes, who rushed to the rescue just in time to save them from the hands of the detestable Northern savages. The two women were locked up in a safe place by the slaves, who in order to mollify the incensed Yankees laid before them all the edibles and drinkables

that were in the house. In the meantime one of the darkies ran to headquarters of General Fitzhugh Lee, informed him of what had taken place, and the general sent a troop of cavalry under the guidance of the faithful slave, to the house. It was surrounded and the Yankee wretches were bagged whilst gorging. A rope was procured and they were hanged to the nearest tree. Things have come to such a pass now that forbearance ceases to be a virtue. The coarse and brutal natures of the Northern people are incapable of appreciating patience and moderation; in fact impunity only renders them more furious and malignant.

Reprisals have therefore become absolutely necessary, and it is only by striking terror into their black souls that their enormities can be stopped. These excesses of the enemy have so exasperated the people of the south that old men and the gentlest women all clamour for retribution, and the government is very much blamed for its weakness in submitting to Yankee barbarities and in not taking an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

I went yesterday to visit the battlefield of Cold Harbour, where the Yankees are said to have lost twelve thousand men. The battle had raged there about a month ago, and yet the ground was strewn with the corpses of Yankee soldiers festering in the broiling sun. The carnage must have been awful, for within the space of ten square yards I counted no less than thirty dead bodies clothed in the Federal uniform. In some cases the flesh had been gnawed away, and the skeletons alone remained, clothed in Lincoln's detestable livery. On some parts of the field the dead men were literally heaped up like stones. Perched on these mounds of human putrefaction were the sleek and sluggish buzzards of Virginia, engaged in a hideous orgie. Like the shoddy contractors of the North they have grown fat on the war. The last campaign of Grant's must have met with their approval, for never has the army of the Potomac supplied them with such copious meals.

Accoutrements and muskets were lying about in all directions, mixed up with cooking utensils and every description of *débris*. Notwithstanding these indisputable signs of a precipitate retreat, Grant and his employers have the audacity to claim a victory at Cold Harbour.

The scene of desolation was heartrending. Fields which before this deadly struggle were covered with waving crops, are now trampled under foot and devastated; the houses in the vicinity are battered down and abandoned; and the poor farmers will have nothing to gather this year but Yankee carcasses mowed down by Southern musketry. My guide and companion on this sad expedition was a young Frenchman, who lost an arm in one of the fights of the West.

As we were rambling over the battlefield we fell in with two stragglers belonging to Grant's army. One of them was broken down and was lying down almost dead with heat and thirst. Although tales of Northern ruthlessness were fresh upon my memory, I could not refrain from giving him some restorative in the shape of a little whiskey and water and a little liquid ginger, which is said to be an excellent thing for this climate. His comrade professed to be very contrite, and told me he had been entrapped into the service when drunk, and that a few days after his impressment he had been sent down to fight the south. He appeared very anxious to be taken prisoner, and swore solemnly that he would never re-enter the army. I had sallied out with the intention of joining the rear of Lee's army, but after hunting about for it all day, we met a cavalryman who told us that the whole of "Massa Bob's" force had crossed the James river in order to confront the invincible Ulysses, who had again changed his base. So we determined to retrace our steps to Richmond, and the next morning I left in a settler's wagon for Petersburg, where General Lee has established his headquarters. The railroad to that place had been cut by the enemy, therefore I had to choose this mode of locomotion, which



was none the pleasantest, seeing that the heat was intense and the dust exceeded anything of the kind I had ever suffered before. I reached Petersburg after a journey of ten hours and made straight for the headquarters of the great commander; but aides-de-camp and orderlies were rushing in and out so frantically that I thought this was not a seasonable occasion for an humble individual like myself to ask for an interview. I had brought out a letter from Mr. W. C. Rives (whose kindness let me tell you in passing I shall never forget) to General Field, now commanding Hood's famous division of Texans and Georgians, and so I determined to shape my course towards his division. In order to do so I had to make many enquiries but the civilians were too much flurried to give me much information, for the Yankees were shelling the city at the time and the noisy projectiles were tumbling about in a very alarming manner. I saw one in particular fall through the roof of a Yankee hospital, and the shrieks which followed the explosion were the most awful I ever heard. I don't know how long I should have been obliged to loaf about had I not met a civil young soldier who kindly volunteered to show me the way to Field's division, as he belonged to a Georgian brigade in that division. I followed him, and he first took me to his own regiment, which not having yet got into line of battle was taking it easy *pro tem.* in a cosy little valley well sheltered from the enemy's artillery. There I was asked by some of the privates to partake of their supper. The warm-hearted fellows pressed me so much that I consented to pitch into their grub, not however without some compunction, as I thought of the harrowing stories about starvation amongst the soldiers which have grieved us ever since this war commenced. But my scruples were soon quieted when I perceived they had plenty of corn-meal out of which they made capital cakes, an abundance of bacon and vegetables, and very fair coffee.

After supper the good-natured guide showed me the way to General Field's headquarters. I had a few moments' very inter-

esting conversation with the general, who is a very gentlemanly and well-informed man. He gave me permission to visit his lines. When we started for our breastworks night had come, and skirmishing was going on all along the front; consequently our progress thither, to say the least was very exciting, for minie balls whistled every now and then close to our ears, and shells burst, as I thought, very near to us. At last we reached the trenches. There I sat some time chatting with the Texans, who seem to be a jovial set of fellows and utterly unmindful of cannon balls and rifle bullets. Crack, crack went the enemy's rifles, and yet my Texan friends laughed and talked as unconcernedly as if they were enjoying themselves in a *café*. The enemy made an attack upon our right that night, and were repulsed with great loss, losing sixteen hundred prisoners. It is evident that after the carnage of the past six weeks they no longer charge on our breastworks with any dash. The Southern troops are dead tired of burrowing like moles in holes and trenches; they want to meet the foe in the open, and drive off Grant as they did McClellan. I am happy to say that so far my health is capital, although the heat is the most terrific I have ever experienced. There are in the room in which I am writing, no less than one hundred and five degrees, and yet it is supposed to be in the shade. But alas I have come to the end of my last sheet, so I must say adieu to you and my dear mother.

BALLARD HOUSE, RICHMOND,

JULY 1st, 1864.

My Dear Father:

Uncle Sam's Grant, by his grand strategic movement to the south side of the James has sent the universal Yankee nation into ecstasies; but we think here that he will not justify his present position any more than he has done elsewhere the crazy exultation of the Northern papers. It is just possible that their gullible readers, who are still indulging in amiable hopes and visions of



Fourth of July jubilees in the doomed city of Richmond, the aspect of which is to be rendered ineffably festive for the occasion by decorating the lamp-posts round the Capitol with the dangling detested forms of Jeff. Davis and his rebel accomplices—it is just possible say I, that they may be disappointed and that their pleasant day dreams may not be realized. When (oh much-to-be-deplored event) we threw off the comparatively mild rule of King George, to submit to the loathsome rule of King Mob. I am happy to see that the Southern people, both high and low, are rapidly losing their admiration for dirty democracy. In the army a healthy reaction has set in against the unbridled license and brazen corruption inherent to our much-bepuffed institutions. By mingling amongst the men in the ranks one soon becomes aware of their distrust in the politicians, as they contemptuously call their representatives in Congress. I have often heard them express their determination, as soon as this war is over, of sweeping away all those fellows, and of taking the management of their affairs into their own hands. It will be an Augean task, but it is the only way of ensuring the peace and tranquillity of the country. I hope those intentions will be carried out, for the intelligence, wealth and respectability of the Confederacy are concentrated in the army; the men who have kept out of it ostensibly to control the destinies of this commonwealth, are not equal to the times; they are for the most part whiskey-drinking ranters of the old United States pattern. It is really painful amidst the heroism of the soldiers and the beautiful self-devotion of the women, to witness the same vulgarity and indecorum which converted the halls of the United States Congress into a bear-garden. We must change all that. This is too great a people to be represented by a parcel of rowdies who chew, spit and whittle while discussing questions of the greatest importance. Such men are fit representatives of Yankees but not of a nation endowed like the South with qualities so noble. It is a notable fact that those noisy fire-eaters, of the Wiggin\* and

\* Wigfall.

Toombs' stripe are now consigned to the limbo of oblivion, having been unable to stand the severe test of events. For the most part they have cut a very poor figure in the field, and now they are eclipsed by men who had no sort of notoriety before this war. These are my impressions on the foregoing subject, and I give them to you for what they are worth, as you asked me to communicate unreservedly the result of my observations. I thought that where there is so much to be admired and extolled I could well afford to make a few strictures on what I consider bad features of our political system. The defects can be easily remedied, and will be remedied I feel certain, for the people are fully alive to them and are not in a humour to tolerate such abuses. I have been most hospitably entertained by all the parties to whom I brought letters of introduction, and also by several of your old friends; Mrs. Stanard among the number has shown me every sort of kindness. She does the honours of her house in so genial and unaffected a manner that it is impossible not to feel at ease when under its roof.

You must tell your excellent kind old friend Mason that I feel most grateful for the hospitality which has been extended to me by his most amiable wife. Her anxiety to conduce to my comfort is really quite motherly, and I appreciate it the more because of the tenderness and maternal solicitude of one whom I love as never son loved a mother, and who yet deserves more love than that.

Aunt Virginia has at last arrived from the Reeds. She is not looking too badly, considering that ever since the last raid starvation has stared her in the face. The poor woman was highly pleased to see me, and although not very demonstrative, she was in raptures with the presents I brought her. I have made her promise that she would give you a recital of the great trials which she underwent whilst the Federals were prowling about Caroline County, and also of her plucky conduct under the circumstances. I have been constantly on the move for the last ten days, oscillating between the army and Richmond. Now having made several in-

dispensable arrangements, I shall go for good to General Field's headquarters, where I expect to stay some time, as he has given me the position of volunteer aide on his staff.

As I mentioned in a former letter, he is a noble fellow and very generally beloved, both by officers and men, on account of his genial and agreeable manners. The outfit I brought over from London will therefore come in very handy, and with the exception of a bag I was ready to take the field from the very first. Horseflesh is at a premium now in the Confederacy; it was therefore not without difficulty that I found a quadruped good enough to make a charge. Fortunately I stumbled on a wounded South Carolinian, who told me his horse was for sale. The animal proving satisfactory I decided to become its owner, which I did in the following manner: I had bought a barrel of sugar for five pounds in Halifax, with the intention of sending some of it down to Aunt Anna and some to the Cowpers; but railroad communications being so terribly uncertain and robberies of hourly occurrence, I thought my saccharine presents stood a very ripe chance of never reaching their destination. To sell the barrel was my first impulse, but upon second thoughts I proposed to swap my sugar, with three hundred dollars to boot, against the horse. The sugar was worth twelve hundred dollars; added to the abovesaid sum it amounted to fifteen hundred dollars, the price asked for him. The bargain has just been struck, and now I am in possession of a good cavalry horse, born and bred in the little secesh state. I straightway christened my purchase "Palmetto". I think that were this transaction to be related in the Jockey Club would create some amusement. I ought to tell you that fifteen hundred dollars in paper is only one hundred dollars in gold. I hear that the Wilmington road is again in running order. The person who agreed to take charge of this scrawl is in a hurry to be off; I must therefore, as they say here, "dry up".

My next will be dated from the front.

Your devoted son, \_\_\_\_\_



HEADQUARTERS OF FIELD'S DIVISION,  
LONGSTREET'S CORPS, A(RMY) N(ORTHERN V)A  
JULY 5TH, 1864.

My Dear Mother:

The links in our correspondence are destined, I fear to be so frequently snapped, that I fully expect you will be not a little surprised to hear that I am now part and parcel of the veteran Army of North Virginia. I wrote to my dear father on the eve of my departure from Richmond, informing him that in accordance with my long-cherished plans I had offered my humble services to the Confederacy, and that I had been fortunate enough to obtain a very acceptable position on General Field's staff, in the capacity of a volunteer aide. Don't frown, I beseech you dear mother, when you read this for I have been generally congratulated on my good luck in getting so desirable a place. I am told that I ought to felicitate myself on getting into this snug berth, for in addition to the opportunities which may offer of gaining a little credit for my zeal and other good qualities which I trust this strange and eventful phase of life may develop in me, I shall have in addition to these opportunities the advantage of agreeable association with gentlemen and men of the world. My general commands Hood's old corps, which has the pretension, and a well-founded one too, of considering itself the crack division of General Longstreet's corps. Lawley's letters and Freemantle's book have shown that after their exploits at Gettysburg and Chickamauga our boys have some grounds for being a little conceited. Our chief, one of Kentucky's noblest sons, was an officer in the old United States army. Like many Kentuckians, amongst whom are to be counted some of our very best generals, he committed his destinies to those of the "Wayward sisters," and helped to thrash the Yankees at Bull Run. He is a very tall, manly and handsome fellow. His manners are so quiet and refined that so far my relations with him have been of the most satisfactory nature, and I feel quite certain that time will improve this agreeable impression.



The other members of the staff are thoroughly good fellows and are doing all in their power to post me up, and to make me as comfortable as the times will admit.

I am for the present the General's only aide, the other two officers serving in that capacity being away; my position therefore is not a sinecure, for since my arrival here I have carried about a great many orders. Our headquarters are situated in a large farm-yard, well shaded by large trees, under which we stretch our blankets at night. I cannot assert that the soil of Virginia is quite as soft as the "sommiers elastiques" to which I have been so long habituated; but I have been able to ascertain from personal experience that Shakespeare was, as usual, in the right when he declared that

"Weariness can snore upon the flint  
Whilst restive sloth finds his down pillow hard."

My snug berth is not by any means a bed of roses, but although I have to rough it a little my health was never better, and as to my appetite, it is perfectly wolfish. It would amuse you to see with what gusto I devour my rations of bacon and cabbage, just as if it was one of Maria's most masterly concoctions. Yesterday was the terrible Fourth of July, on which glorious anniversary the secesh nut was not only cracked to atoms, "*Mais petit bon homme vit encore*" and we are silently but confidently awaiting the Yankee onslaught. That we can well afford to do, as our position is a very strong and healthy one. The location of the Northern army is on the contrary very bad, the country in the rear of their lines being very marshy and sickly. The water they have to drink is said to be of the worst description and to have caused a great deal of sickness in their ranks. Fortunately for us the springs here are delicious. Early yesterday we were on the tiptoe of expectation lest Grant might try to console the North for the non-capture of Richmond by a furious assault on our lines, combined with a

grand bombardment of poor Petersburg. He, strange to say, was unusually quiet, and contented himself during the day with throwing some shells into the city, which did not do much damage beyond smashing some furniture in two empty houses and killing two mules. Along the enemy's breastworks there was a good deal of noise and cheering caused by whiskey and buncombe, which was very freely dispensed by their grog-shop Generals.\* At night their festivities were wound up by a grand *feu d'artifice* of mortar bombs, none of which did us any harm. It is a very fine sight to see one of these huge balls of fire describing graceful parabolas in the heavens; but between ourselves, although Uncle Sam's little entertainment was very good of the kind, I prefer the fireworks of the fifteenth of August.† If this letter is more than usually badly written and stupid, you must blame the Yankees for it; they persist in keeping up a constant rattle of musketry, interspersed now and then with the booming of huge "Dahlgrens". Now this noise is rather apt to flutter a raw recruit, so be indulgent, to the emotion attending a first appearance. I am on duty now, and therefore this missive must be brought to a full stop.

FIELD'S HEADQUARTERS, RAGLAN'S FARM,  
LONGSTREET'S CORPS,

JULY 8TH, 1864.

My Dear Mother:

In my last I told you that the great, the mighty the irresistible Ulysses had not come in time on the festive day consecrated by Yankeedom to brag and buncombe. Since then he has been tolerably quiet, consequently allowing us to take ease with dignity under the shade of the wide-spreading trees which do picket duty under the General's quarters against the ruthless rays of this relentless Virginian sun. Even in this comparatively cool spot the mercury

\* When in the trenches I could distinctly hear their bands playing that abominably vulgar air "Yankee Doodle".

† The celebration in Paris of the fall of the Bastille.

stands at 98, but when my duties take me down to the trenches I generally come to the conclusion that this is a mild temperature, and that I ought to consider myself lucky at not having to endure their heat, rendered still more disagreeable by the total stagnation of the air behind our breastworks. To the left of Field's division our lines are so close to the Yankees that we not only hear their band plainly, but at times the voices of their officers, the nasal twang of which is very audible. Their sharpshooters—the best branch, by-the-by, of the Federal service—are always wide-awake and always ready to pick off the rash secesh who ventures to raise his “knowledge-box” above the parapets; a gulp of fresh air being only attainable at the expense of a broken skull. The men, with characteristic cheerfulness, allow themselves to be basted by the inexorable sun, not however without expressing the hope that “Massa Bob” will soon give them permission to charge the “bluebellies,” as they disdainfully designate their more abdominal adversaries.

Anything, in the opinion of our boys, is better than this detestable trench life which they have led for two months. They don't want to burrow much longer like moles in the sand, for this mode of warfare is to them very humiliating. But General Lee, by persisting in fighting behind dirt, has again given evidence of his wisdom and sagacity, for from the first battle of this campaign up to the present moment, our losses have only been about eighteen thousand, out of which a large proportion are prisoners and wounded men, a great many of whom have already returned to their respective commands. Now the Yanks themselves admit to have lost since the fight began no less than eighty thousand men. Strange to say, although our men are unable to take any exercise or to inhale fresh air, yet the sanitary condition of the army leaves nothing to be desired. This shows the immense superiority of veteran and seasoned troops over green ones, as in the case of Grant's army, which owing to the terrific slaughter in it, is now made up of

hundred days' men, and raw Paddies freshly decoyed from the Emerald Isle. Deserters are constantly coming in from the enemy's lines; they tell us that General Ulysses Grant really intended a grand assault of our lines on the Fourth of July, and for that purpose oceans of whiskey, the Yankee pluck-infusing specific, were administered to the soldiers. Orations of an intensely blood-and-thunder order were delivered by patriotic contractors and shoddy politicians who had come down to have some fun, and to enjoy at a safe distance the spectacle of a "right big fight". But alas—they were disappointed in their humane expectations, for all these stimulants failed to screw the courage of their mercenaries up to the sticking point. If I am not much mistaken the Yanks have had their fill of rebel earthworks and rebel bayonets. To pass the time the enemy's artillery had a little brush with ours last night; at one time their mortar shells came down so thick around our headquarters that we were obliged to retreat hastily but strategically to the farmhouse. When the fire slackened we emerged from our subterranean place of refuge, and again resumed our slumbers *sub tegmine fagi*, notwithstanding our explosive visitors. Such is habit. I am more and more struck with the traits which Man has in common with that most philosophical reptile, the cat. I am sorry I have applied the epithet "reptile" to those favorites of dear Isabella; she will never forgive me, I know. The soldiers have a strong aversion to those "mortal" shells, as they are called in the Confederate ranks. The fact is that at night they are very ugly customers, and pounce upon a poor body like a hawk upon a chicken. A burly Texan private told me that he had never been able to surmount his dislike of them. "I can stand Minie bullets and cannon balls" said he, "but them tarnal mortals air mighty unpleasant; they'd annoy a fellow if he were at the bottom of a well." My saddle, that masterpiece of English saddlery, and my boots, those masterpieces of French cordwainers, are the objects of never-ending admiration on the part of the officers of this army; but the men, who must be excused for not being so appreciative (poor souls) are



disposed to be a little sarcastic at my expense. When they are marching by they will sometimes say jocularly "Come out of them boots, I say, Mister; I see your head a-peeping out", or else "Get a corkscrew for the gentleman, he wants to get out of his boots". In the Confederate army officers of all ranks, whose faces are not known by the men, are equally exposed to a volley of chaff, for the Southern soldier is an inveterate joker—he even chaffed his idol, Stonewall Jackson, for his ungainly seat on horseback. And yet if you speak to them civilly they will always give you an intelligent and ready reply, Provided you are not arrogant or overbearing they will invariably try to oblige you with alacrity. As I was riding along the lines with the chief engineer of the army, General Smith, a very smart and stylish fellow, rather rigid in his attitude and carriage, we came to a Mississippi regiment, and I distinctly heard one of the privates remark to a comrade: "I say, Bill, look at that there officer; he's rather stiff and stuck up, ain't he?" "Yes," answered the other, with that drawl peculiar to some Southerners, "I reckon he had ramrod tea for breakfast". We are lost here in a maze of conjecture as to what will be the next move on the great Virginian chess-board. There are indications on the enemy's left of a movement towards or perhaps across the James river, for there is great bustling going on in that direction; but come what may we are prepared for his wiliest strategy. It is thought by some officers that Grant is about to pull up stakes and sneak off to Washington, which is said to be in jeopardy on account of Early's presence in Maryland. That general commands universal confidence, and is thought one of the best leaders of the Stonewall stripe in the army; he is at the head of thirty thousand men belonging to Jackson's old corps. If I am not mistaken he will give the North a big scare. In the meantime poor Petersburg is being ruthlessly shelled by the Vandals, who seem bent upon destroying it piecemeal out of their wantonness and malice, for it has no importance to us in a military point of view. I walked about the city this morning, and perceived that the exodus was now complete. All

the shops are closed and all the inhabitants who have nowhere else to go to, live in the cellars of their houses; it is melancholy to see nothing but battered walls and charred ruins. The hiss and explosion of the Yankee shells is followed by a few minutes of the most oppressing stillness, which is again broken by the bursting of another of these hideous projectiles. Soldiers, like naughty school boys, are sadly addicted to mischief; this is to a certain extent the case with our men, but their offences are very venial on the whole. The worst case which has come under my notice is that of a party of Alabamians, who killed a calf on the sly, but were caught by the provost guard in the act of butchering him. The men in their defence said that the poor beast had been severely wounded by the enemy while browsing in the neighbouring field. One of them with a wink remarked that they had solely been actuated by motives of humanity in killing him to save his life. The general confiscated the animal, and ever since we have fared capitally, thanks to the Alabamians. As the enemy manifests no inclination for the present of butting his head against our lines, I have obtained a twelve hours' leave of absence to go to Richmond. My principal object in going thither is to enquire whether anything has been received for me from you or from any of my dear correspondents. Oh how I long to revel on a fat batch of letters from sweet home. Tell father, Bella, Bessie and their worser halves that they must write often and not allow themselves to be discouraged by the risks to which their delightful communications are exposed. My love to Mister Bob, the same to my dear little namesake. Ask him whether he thinks that a gray tunic with buff facings and light gray trousers make a pretty uniform. I am very anxious to have the opinion of so experienced a judge of military dress on that point. I am afraid he will say that the *chasseurs* are much more *chics*, for if I am not very much mistaken they wear yellow jackets tucked up with pea-green, and sky-blue-scarlet pants. Adieu, dearest of mothers.

HEADQUARTERS FIELD'S DIVISION, I. R. CORPS, A. N. V.,  
PETERSBURG, JULY 27TH, 1864.

My Dear Father:

My late *jucundus* comes in via Captain Averell, who has just written me to say that he is on the eve of returning to Europe and that he will kindly take charge of the letters which I may have to entrust to him; but alas, owing to the confusion worse confounded of the post-office and the impatient dilatoriness of southern railroads, his note has come to hand at the eleventh hour, thereby allowing me only a few minutes to fly you these hasty lines. Captain has the intention of going to Paris; when there he promises me that he certainly will put in an appearance at No. 59, and tell you how harmoniously we pulled together during our journey to the vexed Bermoothes. He will moreover, give you the latest news from the southern point of view. This will, I know, be most acceptable to you, for Yankee forgers of lies for the European market are striving harder than ever to throw dust into the eyes of the public. Last night we were on the tiptoe of expectation for orders to march towards the Shenandoah, as it was rumoured that Early, incumbered with his Maryland plunder and all sorts of impediments, was hotly pursued by a Federal force largely outnumbering his own. Some fears were felt lest he should be overpowered, and consequently we hoped to be sent to his assistance with Finnegan's men. This hope was knocked on the head by the glorious official intelligence just received that this worthy successor of Stonewall had suddenly wheeled round upon the Yankee General Crook (the man who superseded the vandal Hunter) and inflicted a crushing defeat upon him. This is one of the most brilliant victories of the war, and reminds me of Jackson's palmy days. The enemy are again wiped out from the Valley, which is still the consecrated ground of Yankee touts. This is a brilliant termination to the Maryland campaign we are all ready to admit, but still it condemns us to stagnation in these horrid Petersburg trenches. This life,



although not productive of sickness among the soldiers, as one might expect, is very trying to their patience, and they are longing to stretch their legs by a good long march, now that the weather has become cool and pleasant. You will have heard by this time of the removal of Johnston and the appointment of Hood to the Tennessee army. This change surprised the army very much, and has been the unceasing subject of favourable and adverse comments. For my part I am in favour of it, as I never have had a very brilliant opinion of Johnston as a general commanding Confederate troops; he carried prudence to an excess, and never would give battle until the victory was almost a certainty beforehand. Well, under the present circumstances such a condition of affairs is impossible, for when can it be expected that we shall have the advantage of numbers and position in this war? He had the latter at the commencement of the last campaign, but for some inexplicable reason he abandoned a formidable stronghold in Northern Georgia, and as the country south of that is as level as a billiard-table there is no saying how far the Confederate general would have fallen back. It was facetiously said that he intended to establish his base in the Gulf of Mexico and if necessary throw pontoons across to Cuba, preparatory to a retrograde movement to the land of fragrant "weeds". I herewith enclose a letter from Mr. William Cowper, received a little more than a week ago; I sent you a copy of it a few days ago in a letter to Bessie. You will be much pained to hear that in addition to Hamilton, his brother has also lost John, who died last winter, of fever, in hospital. I fear that the poor old gentleman, in the present state of his health will not be able to withstand these terrible blows. Since your letter of the 11th of June I have not received a line from any of you, but I live in the hope of soon getting another of those delightful batches which make me the happiest man in the whole Division.

My love to my dearest mother, and to all those nearest and dearest to you.



HEADQUARTERS FIELD'S DIVISION,  
PETERSBURG, AUGUST 26TH, 1864.

My Dear Mother:

In any other times I would have felt very guilty at allowing the greater part of a month to elapse without writing to you; but in this instance it is regret and not compunction that I feel; for not being any longer master of my movements, I had to yield to the force of circumstances and anxiously long for a little crevice of time in which to resume my correspondence with you. It has at last come, and I joyfully avail myself of it.

Some three weeks have flown by since I wrote to you from the north side of the James river, whither this division had been sent at the time of Grant's grand subterranean operation before Petersburg, the strategy of which was characterized by the fiendish ingenuity of Yankee warfare; but fortunately the execution was not on a par with the conception of the scheme, and the engineer was hoisted with his own petard. As I told you from my headquarters near Chafin's Bluff, we fully expected to pitch into the Yankees immediately on arriving on the north side of the river, but when our division had got into position the enemy had disappeared from our front. As far as the fighting was concerned we had a little respite, but the staff did not profit much by it, for General Field having been placed *ad interim* in command of that division of the Richmond defences, our duties became very onerous; but we were to a certain extent compensated by the importance it gave us, for we literally became monarchs of all we surveyed. This comparative repose was however of short duration. Our scouts, a few days after, brought us the intelligence that the enemy had thrown a pontoon bridge across the river and that a large force was moving across it. We had but few troops with us, but preparations were made for a resolute defence of the line committed to our care. On Sunday they drove our skirmishers in, and in the afternoon they attempted to carry a portion of our intrenchments. For that

purpose they hurled against us two divisions of their Second Corps, which rushed towards our position with yells, banners flying and bands playing. When they advanced to within about seven hundred yards of our line two twelve pounders, loaded with canister, blazed away at them. Our artillery is not considered by any means the most efficient branch of our service, and of late has been rather sneered at in this army; but on this occasion it did terrible execution. The Yanks advanced in four lines of battle, and a magnificent spectacle it was to witness that mighty host bearing down upon our thinly-manned breastworks. Notwithstanding my emotion I could not refrain from admiring the sight. Our fire made wide breaches in their ranks, and after the third discharge the whole line wavered and fluttered like a flag in the wind; another shell exploding in their midst, they broke and fled in every direction without retaining a shadow of their former organization. In their frantic haste to get out of range of our murderous shots they threw away guns, equipments and all their warlike paraphernalia. Deserters told us that they lost very heavily in that abortive charge. They again renewed the attack, but with less vigour, on our left, and were driven back with great loss by our dismounted cavalry. This was the last of that day's fighting—with the shades of night there came a cessation of hostilities. The next day passed off quietly enough. There was a little picket-firing, but no general engagement; the enemy was evidently preparing for another desperate onslaught. We ascertained later that no less than three corps, numbering about thirty-five thousand men, had come over; we, on the other hand received a few re-inforcements and girded our loins for the coming encounter. In the morning of Tuesday the Yankees attacked us in heavy force, but we repulsed them very handsomely. Finding that these repeated assaults on that part of the line did not pay, General Hancock felt for a more vulnerable point, which he discovered on our left. After riding about ever since dawn, the general and his staff halted in a field in the rear of

Wright's brigade of A. P. Hill's corps. The day was a sultry one, and the heat, superadded to other exertions, made us so weary that we got off our horses and laid down for a few moments on the grass. We had not been there many seconds when we were aroused by a terrific cannonade, followed by heavy volleys of musketry. We mounted horses in a trice; presently squads of frightened men came from the front in anything but a leisurely manner. They informed us that the whole Yankee army had charged them, and that they had been obliged to give way. The firing increased; the air was alive with Minie balls; the ground was torn up by shells and cannon balls, and in a few minutes the whole of Wright's brigade was stampeding towards us. We strove to rally them by entreaties and by menaces, and with pistols drawn we threatened to shoot them if they did not go back, but it was of no avail; you might as well try to argue with a flock of affrighted sheep as with a crowd of panic-stricken soldiers. Up to this time we cannot account for this stampede. The attack, it was true, was sudden and unexpected, and the force of the enemy enormous, but the men who were now flying before the Yankees had always beaten them, and had invariably borne themselves on every battlefield with distinguished bravery. We are therefore much puzzled to find out what caused them to disgrace the name of their brigade in that manner. My poor comrade Captain Mason, was shot through the body during our fruitless efforts to rally the men; he fell into the hands of the enemy. We have since heard that he is not likely to live, although General Hancock, who was an old friend and classmate of General Field at West Point, promises to have him well attended to. The general, finding that nothing can be got out of these men, decided to fall back, for the Federals were swooping down upon us in overwhelming numbers; it seemed as though forty thousand men would be an under-estimate of the force. I was sent by him for reinforcements. I had orders to bring up without delay, two brigades of our own division, viz: Laws' Alabama and Binning's Georgians.



They came up at a double quick amid a very galling fire, they were formed right under the guns of the enemy, and then they rushed in with a deafening war-whoop. It was really splendid to witness the dash of these gallant fellows. I was so carried away with enthusiasm that I cantered along side of them, but alas I did not accompany them during the whole of their triumphant advance for my faithful charger, poor Palmetto, fell under me, pierced in the left hip by a Minie ball. I was a little stunned by the fall, and when I managed to extricate myself from under him our brave boys had beaten back the foe and recaptured the position which they had taken from us. I am happy to say that our loss was relatively small, whilst that of the enemy must have been very heavy—the battlefield was literally blue with their dead and wounded; we moreover captured seven hundred prisoners. The fight was not a long one, not having lasted over an hour and a half, but old veterans tell me that for the time it lasted the battle of Darbytown was one of the hottest affairs they had ever been in. The shelling was positively infernal; all the woods at the rear of the battlefield were torn and chopped to pieces by the enemy's artillery; it is a wonder that any one should have survived such a tempest of shot and shell, but our brave soldiers did not mind it any more than if it had been a summer shower. I cannot say that I like these Yankee shells, but I have got used to them, for since I joined the army I have been plentifully regaled with them. But what I strongly object to are the Minie balls. Some buzz like hornets, others mew like cats, when they pass you; all these sounds indicate a great proximity to your knowledge-box, and if I was not afraid of being afraid I think I would skedaddle like Wright's men. All the wounded prisoners that we took concur in reporting the brutality and incompetency of their officers as flagrant. One of them, a Frenchman who was badly stuck in the thigh with a bayonet, told me that all the officers of his regiment were drunk, so much so that some of them could not stand when the fight commenced. On that oc-



casion I was able to convince myself that the native element in the Northern army was conspicuous by its absence alone; for out of ten prisoners that I questioned not one was a full-blooded Yankee. Among them there were a Frenchman, three Irishmen, four Germans a Belgian and an Italian. With the exception of the Irishry none of them understood English. Among other curiosities I saw some wounded gentlemen of African descent who had been spared by a merciful North Carolina brigade; had they fallen into the clutches of Hood's old division I doubt much whether they would have survived to tell the tale. They professed to be very penitent, and seeing I was rather disposed to protect them than to ill-treat them I got a good deal out of them. They addressed me in a much more humble or if I may use the expression, slavish manner—than any darkies I have hitherto come across in the sunny South. All said they had been forced into the army, and as at Petersburg they had been put in front at the point of the bayonet. The part of the line which they attacked was not broken, and stepping outside the breastworks a horrid spectacle met my gaze; hundreds of these wretched African soldiers had been mowed down, and were lying thick in front of our works. On the whole, notwithstanding the misbehavior of that brigade of Hill's corps, our achievement was a very brilliant one; for with a handful of men, say seven thousand at the outside, we drove back three of the enemy's largest corps; and as usual our division won for itself and its commander golden opinions. General Lee, towards the close of the fight, rode up and congratulated the general on the able manner in which he had handled his troops. At one time it was touch and go, and it required great coolness and skill on the part of our general to parry the attempts of the Yankees to turn our flanks; had they succeeded in accomplishing that the consequences might have been very serious. The reverse was a very heavy one to the enemy; by sending over the best troops they evidently counted on a success. We had several small artillery and picket engagements during the rest of the

week, but finally they sloped off without trumpet or drum, and on Sunday morning Hancock & Co., had "vamosed". Desertions from the Yankee army have been so frequent during this campaign that General Lee has desired to encourage them by circulating throughout Grant's army a paper in which kind treatment and protection is promised to those soldiers who come over to us voluntarily. This has produced the desired effect, for deserters flock into our lines at a monstrous rate, and the cry is "still they come".

Last week has been a very fatiguing one to us. For ten days we have not had time to pull off our boots; and as to sleep we have had to nap it, *à la grace de Dieu*, at one time sleeping in a slushy rifle pit, at another in a shaky morass. This is very rough work, it is true, and well calculated to try the mettle of a Parisian loungeur. Well, wonderful to say, I have never felt stronger or more healthy. At one time I was a little annoyed by the scorbutic effects of our salt meat diet, but now I am all right again, owing to the splendid Maryland beef for which we are indebted to old Jubal Early, our efficient commissary. As a *pis aller* for their failure on the North side, the Yankees attacked and captured a portion of the Weldon railroad; a small force of our infantry was sent to dislodge them. It succeeded in driving them for the distance of three miles, taking over two thousand prisoners with the Yankee general Hayes. The enemy acknowledge a loss of no less than three thousand killed and wounded in that affair. Our people being exhausted with their exertions, had to stop. On Thursday a rear and flank attack was made by A. P. Hill which was eminently successful. We drove them from that part of the track which was of importance to us. They still retain a couple of miles of it, but they are welcome to it for we can do without it. Three thousand more were captured. I can vouch for the accuracy of that statement, as I saw them marching down the main street of this city, and a more cowed, grimy and forlorn set of fellows I have never laid eyes on. We had arrived here the night before to act as a corps of reserve in case the attack-

ing column had required any support. We were under arms for several hours, ready to start at a moment's notice; but A. P. Hill's men did their work so well as to need no reinforcement from Longstreet's corps.

Now for the first time since Saturday week I have been able to indulge in a complete course of ablutions, and to smoke a quiet pipe of fragrant Virginia tobacco; two most inestimable luxuries, for I was longing for a whiff of the delicious weed, and with respect to the other the external application of water was as necessary to me as it would be to those unclean animals that are called—*de soie* in Burgundy.

I think our successes of the past fortnight will give the peace candidate a great lift at Chicago, and may perhaps insure his nomination. The army and the people ardently desire a cessation of the carnage, but the idea of an armistice, as it is understood in the North, is scouted by every one but the faint-hearted. A very pretty sort of armistice 'twould be, with our territory occupied by the enemy, and ports blockaded. If it was accepted by us, all the advantages acquired by us during this campaign would be lost, and as we have to deal with the most slippery and cunning people in the world, there are a thousand chances to one that we would be circumvented and imposed upon. These Yankees are so utterly faithless, that I feel confident that if they found us off our guard whilst the negotiations were going on, they would without hesitation fetter us.

I am dying to hear from you all, but this wish has only been gratified once since I have been in the Confederacy, and yet scores of blockade runners have arrived, but without bringing me a line from you. I ought not to complain, for your case is analogous to mine, and I suppose that you will only receive a very small proportion of the many letters that I have written to you. If there is any likelihood of our being quiet at all, I shall apply for a leave

of absence to go to Richmond in order to ask my friends there, whether, happily, there are any missives for your forlorn son. My love to my dear father, to Bella and Bessie, and their excellent husbands, and with many kisses, I must now bid you good-bye.

Your affectionate son,

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HEADQUARTERS FIELD'S DIVISION,

NEAR PETERSBURG,

SEPTEMBER 13TH, 1864.

My Dear Father:

A well-sustained correspondence between two loving souls is truly delightful, for then tidings of those nearest and dearest, and affectionate messages are reciprocally interchanged. By a little stretch of imagination one can almost fancy that it is a conversation, and figure to one's self that the familiar voice strikes one's ear. But when letter after letter despatched with exemplary regularity fails to elicit any response, then hope fades away and the heart sickens. The latter, I grieve to say, is my case, for after months of anxious suspense I have at length settled down into a state of sullen despair. I really think that if by a miracle, a line from any of you should ever reach me, I would not believe the evidence of my senses. I would not, however, have you to take up the impression that by those gloomy excogitations, I am inclined to put a bad construction upon your silence. I know that bales of missives from the dear folks at home have been shipped in unlucky blockade runners, and that they are wasting their sweetness in the briny waters of the stormy Atlantic, but that does not make my case any the less painful.

The army of Tennessee, as I feared, has met with a severe reverse; but bad as it is I have no idea that Georgia will be wrested from us by the invader. We still have some backbone left, no matter what the Yankees say, and if our authorities display proper en-



ergy, and for the nonce sacrifice their selfish prejudices and antipathies to the public weal, the enemy may yet be driven out of Northern Georgia, and be compelled to take the back track. We have just received the cheering intelligence that Kirby Smith has crossed the "father of Waters" with a portion of the army. This will be a valuable accession to those western forces. The public are down upon Hood for the abandonment of Atlanta. It is true he was out-generalled by Sherman (who, be it said in passing I consider the Napoleon of the North), but had his men fought as they ought to have fought, I am not sure but that the result would have been different. These western troops have been commanded so long by incompetent and nerveless generals that their steadiness in the field is not much to be relied upon. The men of this corps, who saw them fight at Chickamauga, all say their fighting is vastly different from ours. In fact, those Mississippians and Tennesseans resemble the Yankees a good deal: they bluster, brag, and lie before a battle, but whilst it is going on they are as meek as mice. Longstreet really won that victory for Bragg. There was some talk after the fall of Atlanta of sending two divisions, ours being one of them, down to Georgia; none of us relished the idea much of being separated from this army, which is really a happy family, in order to join Hood's uncongenial command, but, thank God the rumor did not take on reality. The Yanks are of course jubilant, and in their wild exultation last Sunday they fired a salute of one hundred shotted guns upon poor Petersburg, which resulted in the killing of a woman and two children. When Grant hears of the frightful execution that was done, his joy will doubtless, know no bounds. On the whole, I think that the moral effect of the fall of Atlanta on the Northern elections will be worse than the material effect on the South. After a season of unexampled drought rain has poured in torrents for several days, and now another change is setting in. The wind is furiously high, and the temperature terribly low; this change, of course, entails camp fires and lots of

blankets. With these and other expedients resorted to by soldiers in order to increase their creature comforts, we are able to bid defiance to the bleak north-wester.

Since the battle of Darbytown I am minus part of the "pride, pomp, and circumstances of glorious war" in the way of horseflesh, for my noble warhorse, the much-by-me-lamented Palmetto, was killed by a Yankee bullet in that memorable engagement. Poor Palmetto! he was a splendid charger; so willing, so spirited, and yet so manageable under fire, he combined all the steadiness of a veteran with the dash of a young soldier. The day before his death Palmetto had been hit by a shell, but this did not damp his ardour, for the gallant animal was galloping proudly with ears erect and nostrils open, when the messenger of death struck him. But let us stop! My feeling is getting the better of me; I am growing very pathetic over a very small event for these frantic times. I hope this letter will reach you—I am going to entrust it to the kind care of Mr. Cameron, the owner of the *City of Petersburg* and other successful blockade runners.

If you do not get it, *j'y perdrai mon Latin*.

With my best love to all the well-beloved,

Believe me, your devoted son,

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HEADQUARTERS, FIELD'S DIVISION,

THURSDAY, OCT. 6TH, 1864.

My Dear Mother:

So mournful was the tone of my last missive to my father, that it might almost have been called a wail of misery; if you thought it too low-spirited, there was some cause for that, for after nine months of feverish expectation I had begun to dread that I was henceforth doomed to a terrible dearth of home tidings. But I have changed my tune, for now I have the happiness to thank you and my other

kind correspondents for two delightful communications which reached me within the last fortnight.

What a happy time for the rebel! The first to come to hand was the batch containing your and my father's letters of the 5th of August, together with the counterfeit presentment of dear little Rob; as a work of art I think it is a success, but with regard to the likeness I am not competent to speak, for to tell you the truth I should not have recognized the little cherub, so altered is he; why, when I left Sweet Home, Monsieur Robert was, as the Irishman would say, most unquestionably "barefooted on the top of his head;" and now the incipient *cocades* is blessed with a luxuriant head of hair, it might have been a wig it is true, but it looks remarkably natural; however, that does not signify, and I am immensely proud to have a nephew with such a splendid head of hair.

As neither of you alluded in those letters to the receipt of mine from Bermuda and Wilmington, I concluded that they were burned at sea; this annoyed me very much, because I thought that your anxiety at receiving no tidings from me would be great, but, much to my relief, your letters of the 9th of July announced a few days ago that you had got the news of my arrival in Dixie. I was longing to write to you *instantly* but that was not possible, on account of the constant marching and counter-marching that we have had to perform for the past three weeks; all day and sometimes all night in the saddle, is the sort of work we have had to do ever since the 20th of last month. When the first batch reached me, we were on a long tramp to support Hampton, and to amuse the Yanks whilst he operated in the rear; the whole thing was a success, especially the bovine part of it, for the enemy only perceived that Hampton's cavalry had gobbled up two thousand five hundred head of cattle, and horses innumerable, when it was too late to recapture them. After that we had a few little fights with the Yankees. On Thursday we suddenly received orders to march over to the north side of the James River. We got here just in the nick of

time to prevent the enemy, who had stolen a march upon us, from capturing the outer line of fortifications. We drove them back with huge slaughter, especially amongst the citizens of African descent, who are still lying as thick as blackberries on the battlefield. The prisoners all tell the same tale, *viz*: that they are placed in the front ranks, and are told that if they run back, the white troops will shoot them down. The Yankee advance was a surprise, and they consequently captured a small portion of the line which was held by local troops, who behaved in a far from gallant style; if they had been at all steady the enemy ought never to have got into those works. It is intended to retake that portion of the lines, and for that purpose we made a reconnaissance in force. In doing this, I had the misfortune to get my horse (dear little Torpedo) wounded, he fell so suddenly that I thought he was killed; I am happy to say that I was mistaken, I now entertain some hope of his recovery. He was struck by the bullet on the right side of the neck, it took a downward course and lodged near his left shoulder blade, but fortunately without injuring the bone. As it is merely a severe flesh wound, the Division Vet. says that with proper care, my poor little nag will probably get over it. I am justified in hoping so, for I have seen horses here recover from the most hideous mutilations. Fortunately, I was not on him, when the bullet hit him; had I been it is more than probable that my left leg would have been crushed, so sudden was his fall. The enemy had opened a desultory fire at the time, in order to stop the reconnaissance, and we had just dismounted to put our cavalry out of danger, when this Yankee bullet whizzed past us and buried itself in Torpedo's neck. I am literally afoot, having had one horse killed and another badly wounded in less than six weeks. Under these circumstances I have applied for leave of absence, in order to go down to Georgia, and to see for myself after our affairs in that state. My request has been granted, and I shall therefore set out for Columbia, S. C., to-morrow, and shall go thence to Savannah and Tibeauville.



The vicissitudes and uncertainties of every war, and of this one in particular, are so great that not possessing superhuman prescience or that clairvoyance which sees through millstones, I shall not attempt to prophesy what the issue of this campaign will be; this stroke of ill luck may not have run out, or, on the other hand, Fortune's wheel may soon be turned the other way. Come what may, I feel confident (mark! this is my personal opinion, uninfluenced by any reputed sages in or out of the army) that Richmond will not fall this year. The more narrowly I observe these momentous events, the more I am convinced that there is no greater game of chance than the bloody game at which we are now playing, and therefore to predict dogmatically that such and such a thing will happen is an idle waste of words. The times are out of joint, reason is unhinged, and everything generally going or gone off the track. How then is it possible for the most sagacious mind, North or South, to know that it will occur between this and the ides of November? The fact is, there is no longer any scope for farsighted sagacity, chance rules the hour, the tide fluctuates. Under the circumstances I cannot help comparing the man (be his reputation for prescience ever so great) who would have us believe he sees far into futurity, to those prophets of the turf who are regarded as unmitigated humbugs. Nothing has tended to convince me more than the recent fights in the Valley, that war is a big lottery. We never dreamt for a moment that Early's forces could be worsted, and we all looked upon victory up there as a dead certainty; we were doomed to be disappointed, Sheridan did whip us, but how did he do it? Through the superiority of his cavalry over our worthless Valley troopers; these must not be confounded with Hampton's cavalry, which is a very efficient body. The mounted forces of the Valley have been entirely demoralized by the predatory mode of warfare which they have been engaged in along the Maryland frontiers. Raids have proved the curse of a great part of our Southern cavalry; honest men before the war have been converted

into horse thieves and henroost plunderers, and in the course of time a well-disciplined regiment has become a disorderly rabble, fit only for pillage. I think Napoleon said in his usual sententious way, the greater the blackguard, the better the soldier! This aphorism does not hold good here, for I have noticed that the greatest thieves are the greatest cowards; they are a terror to the women and children, and often do more harm to friends than to the enemy. Of this kind was Morgan's command in the opinion of the regular army; it was nothing but an *omnium gatherum* of rogues and freebooters, the discipline was lax and the morality execrable. His Kentucky campaign was a failure through these causes alone, and thousands who would have flocked to his standard when he went there were so disgusted with the conduct of his men that they held themselves aloof. If these fellows have achieved any reputation, it is owing to the newspaper puffs. I have seen enough of this country to convince me that the pets of the newspapers are not necessarily good soldiers. Thorough soldiers, good patriots, are above currying favour with penny-a-liners, and bidding for their praises. The moral of all this is, that we lost the battle of Winchester on account of the utter insufficiency of these Valley marauders; our infantry never fought better, they had actually driven back the Yanks with great loss and were following up their successes, when their left flank was turned over owing to the stampeding of the above-named cavalry.

It is said that the western horizon is brightening, but seeing is believing, and in a few days I shall see how Beauregard, whom I look upon as a good though not brilliant general, will set about retrieving our fallen fortunes there. The hero of heroes, the worthy successor of Jackson, Forrest, is busily at work in Sherman's rear, and I think that those operations will be productive of some great results. My next letter will be penned at Columbia or Savannah.

In the meantime, adieu, dearest mother, don't forget to kiss all the family circle for me.

Your devoted son,

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P. S.—In my last letter, I requested you to send me some of the latest French publications, should you have a good chance of doing so, I trust you will avail yourself of it, for I am dying to pore over a good French book.

TIBEAUVILLE,

OCTOBER 18TH.

My dear Father:

If, as I hope, my last letter from the front to my beloved mother reached her before these lines, then neither you nor she will be much surprised at this sudden change of base, for in it I apprized you of my intention of going down to Georgia for a few weeks, having succeeded in obtaining a short furlough. On joining Massa Robert's\* army, I had made up my mind not to apply for such a permission until Christmas, but I had reckoned without the Yankee bullets which have spared neither of my poor horses. The last one (dear little Torpedo) came to grief in the Fort Harrison fight; he was shot in the neck, and is now *hors [e] de combat*, as the bullet has buried itself so deep that it cannot be extracted; I feel that he is lost to me. It is a grievous loss, the more especially as he was rapidly becoming the best charger in the army. A dismounted aide-de-camp is the fifth wheel to the wagon, and therefore this leave of absence was granted me without much reluctance, Torpedo's mishap being my opportunity. I left Richmond on the 7th ultimo. The scare caused by Grant's menacing movements having by that time greatly subsided, I got on board of the Richmond and Danville cars, and after a long and tedious journey of three days, in the most atrocious of conveyances (sometimes I had

\*General Lee.

nothing but common trucks to lie on), I reached Columbia, S. C. I tarried one day in that pretty place in order to rest my cramped and bruised limbs. Columbia has not the blighted aspect of most Southern cities. When there I was advised to shape my course towards Tibeauville, *via* Augusta and Savannah, and not by way of Charleston, where the yellow fever is very rife. I accordingly passed through the bustling town of Augusta and thence went to Savannah, thus flanking "Yellow Jack." Hearing that there was still a good deal of sickness there, I only halted a few hours in Savannah and prosecuted my trip to Tibeauville, which I reached on the 13th. It is a new settlement situated about ninety miles from Savannah and the Gulf railroad. There I met with a very kind and hearty welcome, both Messrs. James and William Cowper, by their cordial greeting, seeming to be glad to see me; it is under the roof of the latter gentleman that I am penning these lines. In 1862, when the stampede occurred along the sea coast, several of our Altamaha neighbours determined to migrate to this spot, the inducement for doing so being the cheapness of the lands and the salubrity of the climate. The country is a wild one and the soil, it is true, is very light, but the impression then prevailed that the war would soon be over, and that if the lands produced just enough to feed the negroes during this temporary migration, it was all that could be expected. Messrs. Cowper considering the proximity of the railroad was desirable, after consulting together came to the conclusion that it was the best thing that could be done under the circumstances, and so they followed suit. Our land here was purchased for a mere song, but it was only partially cleared and is very poor indeed. It is situated in the midst of a vast pine barren. These trees are the finest I have ever seen yet, it is a matter of great wonderment to me that they should grow to such an enormous size in this inferior soil. Oh! would that they could be transplanted to *La Boulaye*, then they would be worth a magnificent fortune. Some of them, however, have been turned to account by Mr. Wil-



liam Cowper, who built his house entirely of pine wood, he was the architect, and our sable carpenters constructed it. A remarkably cosy and snug dwelling it is, I assure you, the doors shut well, the windows are fully as wind and wet-proof as those of your apartments in No. 59—and, mark! these are home manufactures; for little or nothing was bought that could be made by our people. The nail item being in these times a very heavy one, a substitute in the shape of pine-knot pegs was hit upon, and it has been found to answer very well. Nothing could have better exemplified than this war, the truth of the adage that “necessity is the mother of invention,” for here is a colony of planters who, before these troubles, were dependent upon Yankees for necessities as well as luxuries; they are forced to dispense with the latter, and their ingenuity supplies them with the former.

Food in these frantic times is terribly dear, but clothing is still more so, and to fit out a large gang of negroes is an enormous expense. Last year the whole of the gang was rigged out from head to foot with clothing woven, spun, and made up upon the place; the wool was shorn from the backs of a few sheep we happily owned, the cotton was grown here, and the dyes manufactured in Mr. W. Cowper’s laboratory. I herewith enclose some samples of our homespuns, if they are not very elegant they at any rate have the merit of being strong and serviceable. Now, this is very creditable, is it not, for a set of effete and luxurious planters? Our textile manufactures are pronounced superior to any in the neighbourhood, and consequently the Hopeton darkies are very proud of their factory. You will be doubtless gratified to learn that the exigencies of the times have developed so much industry and ingenuity. I expect that you will be still more pleased and astonished, when I assure you that all the machinery from the cotton ginning and spinning wheel up to the loom itself was made here, and that the lathe with which they were turned was also a home manufacture. The operatives are becoming quite expert and very fond of the factory.

Considering the times we might have esteemed ourselves pretty lucky on the whole, had the corn crop only been tolerably good, but alas, such was not the case, and owing to the torrential rains that have prevailed throughout this region of country, the yield of corn on this property will not feed one-tenth of the gang; whereas if the crop had succeeded, we would have had a large surplus for sale. To supply that deficit, we shall have to buy a considerable quantity, and at present prices it will require the disbursement of no small sum. I have had the old steam-engine advertised for sale; it ought to sell well, if so, the proceeds will keep the estate out of debt. As there is employment here for only a small number of hands, it has been deemed expedient to hire out as many as we can, for in doing so we economize not only food but clothing. Each hand, on an average, produces about three hundred and sixty dollars a year, and he gets plenty of molasses and hominy and five pounds of bacon a week. The negroes are contented with this species of labour, seeing that they are well fed. Now the negroes who remain here don't get as much food, their bill of fare consisting of hominy, vegetables, and molasses (for we plant sugar cane here, this year we hope to make as many as fifteen barrels), but they are for the most part either very young or very old people, and submit to this scanty fare rather than be hired out. On my arrival the good creatures crowded around me and nearly shook my hands off, they were so glad to see me, and on account of the hairy appendage which now adorns my chin and cheeks, they all exclaimed "Oh! Massa, we would not have knowed you if we had not seed you," a truism which no Irishman would dare to dispute. I did not perceive any surliness amongst them, nor could I discern any signs of discontent. We have lost about thirty-five negroes by sickness and running away, since the removal from Hopeton, and amongst them some prime hands; lately two young men, Amos and Wilson, ran off to the Yankees. This was somewhat surprising, for they had always appeared very happy and contented, and had never

given any trouble whatever. They are a queer whimsical people, and where they are concerned it is impossible to build any theory. As an instance of this I will adduce the case of Doctor Fr——'s gang, which was considered the worst on the river; his darkies were all thought very inferior in every respect to any others, and yet he had not lost one by running away, whilst the Nightingale negroes, who were well cared for and petted, stampeded in a body at the outbreak of the war, and were only retaken with great difficulty; since then a great many have run away. The Butler estate has lost over one hundred. In the war of 1812 the slaves who were treated with the greatest kindness and leniency were the first to slope off; on the other hand, those who were under a strict system did not attempt to run off. This present war has been so fruitful of these discrepancies that the most enthusiastic theorists on both sides cannot but be discouraged in the long run. All the refugee planters round here say that their negroes have never been so submissive or docile, and yet the loyalty of these sons of Africa is not much to be counted on.

My chief inducement in coming down here was to pay Hopeton a visit, but I have been obliged to relinquish that project on account of the sickness which prevails along the coast. God willing, I hope to do so at Christmas. I am told that like all the plantations along the river ours is in the most horrible condition, owing to the freshets and neglect. All the banks and trunks have been swept away; to put them in order will cost us much time, money and labour. It is a consolation, but a meagre one, to know that the inundations having been so heavy we could not have made anything for two years; in the meantime, it is true the lands have been resting, and if we are not irretrievably smashed I hope that premium crops may still be raised at Hopeton. Mr. James Cowper's health, of late, has been breaking down under the weight of the cares and afflictions which have beset him; the hot weather, too, of this summer had sadly impaired it, and his family tell me that they have lost

all hope of his recovery, but fortunately a favourable change has set in, and I am happy to say that I found him, although very infirm, looking much better than I expected. The loss of his two sons, Hamilton and John, who both died of typhoid fever, has cast a sad gloom on himself and his family. His three other sons are in the army—James in the Engineer corps, Alexander is with Early in the Valley, and Robert has been a prisoner at Fort Delaware ever since the battle of Gettysburg. I purpose staying here a few days longer, and then going on to Savannah, where I shall remain a short while provided there is less sickness, and then I shall retrace my steps towards Virginia with my servant Daniel, who has grown up to be a strong and hearty fellow. You remember his health was very bad when we were at Hopeton together, and then it was generally thought that he was too consumptive to live. He is a good faithful boy, and knows perfectly how to attend to a horse; I have therefore decided to take him up to the front as my camp servant. I meditate inflicting some more of my caligraphy on you at Savannah. Adieu, dear father; kiss my angelic mother, Bella, Bessie, and all their belongings for me.

Your devoted son,

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CAMP, NEAR RICHMOND,  
FIELD'S DIVISION,  
NOVEMBER 24TH, 1864.

Sweetest Mother:

Profiting by my brief sojourn in the placid little city of Savannah, towards the end of October, I indulged in some ink-spilling, the results of which were a few fly tracks, which I addressed to my beloved father. As a particularly long hiatus in my correspondence gives you pain, I hope that fortune will favour the aforesaid fly tracks during their trans-oceanic flight. After an absence of about a month from the A. N. V., I returned to the Old Dominion early in the present month, and forthwith rejoined the command of



which I am proud to be a member. Although my trip to, and stay in Georgia, was on the whole as satisfactory as I could expect in these times, yet I was in great glee to turn my back upon the abominable cars of the Richmond and Savannah railroads, and to be once more rid of their indescribable discomforts. I do not hesitate to declare that I would a thousand times prefer to face the hardships of a winter campaign, or the privation of a Northern prison, than to undergo the horrors of a Southern car. Immediately on my arrival I went to my excellent friend Mrs. Mason, with the cheering presentiment that perhaps some letters from you and my other dear correspondents might be in her safe keeping. Picture to yourself my extasies of delight, for I received from her kind hands two gloriously fat envelopes containing your letter of the 17th and 28th; Bessie's of the 9th and 23rd; Jean's of the 11th; and dear little Richard's of the 8th of the same month. This was indeed a feast well calculated to cheer the heart of your ragged rebel of a son, who has not had many of those treats. I was glad to learn that you had received pretty regularly my letters of the month of June, I trust that those or the succeeding months will be as fortunate. My joy would have been well nigh marred by the intelligence you communicated to me of my dear Isabella's misfortune, had it not been palliated by the comforting assurance that she was doing well. Tell her, dear, dear mother, that my sympathy in this sad trial is proportioned to my love for her. If her health is as you say in a satisfactory condition, I have not much apprehension for the *morale*, as she, in addition to her buoyant temperament, has her noble little boy to console her,—that diminutive sunbeam will, I warrant it, dissipate the lowest spirits. I must not omit to mention the pleasure I experienced at finding amongst the contents of the plethoric envelopes another of the dear little fellow's photographs, as well as two likenesses of my Scoto-Gallic namesake; say to the dear little Highlander that his pretty *cartes-de-visite* enhanced the delight I derived from his well-written, well expressed, and affection-

ate epistle. I am the proudest of uncles, and if a certain great gun on your side of the briny waters owes his success to the fact that he is the nephew of his uncle, how much more ought I to congratulate myself upon being the uncle of such nephews? I have been so courteously and so kindly treated by our most estimable General, by his staff and by officers of this glorious little division, on returning the other day I was so warmly greeted, that I now begin to regard this army as my second home. From the first I made many agreeable acquaintances in the command; since then they have ripened into sincere friendship, these I feel will be lasting and their fruits sweet, for they have taken root in the mellow soil of mutual respect and esteem, without which I contend that friendships are more or less hollow and fragile. Here there is not much room for imposture or hypocrisy, the fiery ordeal of this sort of life being a test which they cannot resist, danger is a touchstone which exposes cowardice, and privation in the long run will eventually tear away the mask of selfishness, and thus, war a hateful curse though it be, develops the good qualities of good men on the one hand, and makes the bad ones of bad men appear in all their hideous nakedness. Judge of my gratified astonishment when I returned, I was told my wounded nag had recovered, and instead of his being in *extremis* I found him alive and actually kicking. In a short time he will be I hope, perfectly well. He has got over a wound that would have killed nine horses out of ten. It is with animals like human beings, a powerful constitution and good blood give them many chances of recovery.

During my absence two pretty heavy fights occurred. The second one was a brilliant success, for we repelled a Yankee attack very handsomely. The first one would have been equally so, had Hoke supported us, but as usual he was slow or showed the white feather. We had to charge the portion of the Yankee works on the Newmarket and Darbytown roads, and we had got within forty yards of them, notwithstanding a withering fire from the front

(several officers have told me that they had never seen a more regular and beautiful advance, the brigades moved as if they were on the parade ground), but Hoke not coming up the Yankees who were in an advance work on our right gave all their attention to our advancing line, and poured a deadly flank fire into us; so terrible was it that General Field gave the order to fall back, which was done slowly and doggedly. The gallant General Gregg was killed in this affair by an enfilading shot; his loss is deeply lamented by both officers and men whose idol he was; he commanded the Texans. At his burial, which took place with all due pomp, there was hardly a dry eye in all that brigade. General Lee considered him the best brigadier in the army. Shortly before his death it was rumoured that he would assume the command of the lamented Rodes's division, and a worthy successor he would have made to that able general. The deaths in general officers, this campaign, that I regard the most to be deplored, are those of Rodes, Jenkins, and Gregg—they were all three men of the right stuff. The day after I got back the Yankees again thumped their heads against our line, and were most disastrously hurled back. They assaulted our breastworks in immensely heavy columns, but could not stand up against the well-directed fire of our artillery and rifles, and they fled helter-skelter, throwing away all that could impede their flight, much to the amusement of our boys, who enjoyed this affair as much as if it had been a cricket match or a horse race. Our losses on that occasion were very small, they did not amount to more than twenty at the very outside, in killed and wounded; whereas the enemy suffered very heavily. I saw myself four hundred of them surrender in a lump. In other parts of the field many prisoners were made. I feel confident that twelve hundred will not cover their losses in our front. The men fought with redoubled spirit and zest because Longstreet was there to inspire them with confidence, by his imperturbable serenity and admirable *sang-froid*. I have heard many soldiers say they love to look at the old war-

horse before going into battle, because he looks so composed and self-possessed that he never seems to be haunted with the fear of failure. If he had not been wounded at the most critical moment of the battle of the Wilderness, the flank movement which he was about to initiate would have most probably routed Grant's army. General Field assumed command of the corps, but before the general-in-chief's plans could be communicated to him, it was too late to execute them. It seems that the fates have ordained that some such untoward event should always neutralize our greatest victories. The glorious battle of Chancellorsville is another instance of that "*juighon*." All was quiet when I left Georgia, as it was supposed that Sherman was going north in pursuit of Hood, but, since I left that state it appears that he has cut loose from his base and that he is flying about generally. The movement is an extremely hazardous one, and although it has sent the North into a state of crazy rapture, it is just possible that the hero of Atlanta may come to grief. But we are in a complete fog respecting what is going on in Georgia at present, as the newspapers are requested not to publish news from that quarter, which our inquisitive friends the Yankees might turn to account. For the nonce they are dependent upon us for intelligence from Sherman, and it is our policy to deny it them as long as possible. General Lee's army is fully larger by twenty thousand men than it was when I left, and if all the line is as strong as the one we now occupy, I do not think that a legion of three hundred thousand imps, headed by his Satanic Majesty himself, could carry it. Adieu, my beloved mother, thank my dear father and the other dear folks for their epistolary souvenir.

Your devoted son,

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CAMP, NEAR RICHMOND,  
HEADQUARTERS, FIELD'S DIVISION,  
DECEMBER 9TH, 1864.

My Dear Father:

I seize with avidity a golden opportunity which has just presented itself of forwarding to you with perfect safety the following lines. My most excellent friend, Monsieur the French Vice-Consul at Richmond, has just apprised me of his sudden determination to leave poor bleeding Dixie in a couple of days, and to return to France as fast as steam could carry him. He has kindly offered to take charge of this letter to you, and as it is sure of reaching its destination I think that I had better embody in it a summary of several items of interest contained in my previous missives to you and my other beloved correspondents. These, owing to the thousand and one risks of the blockade, which is becoming every day more stringent, I doubt whether you will ever get. At the beginning of the month of October I wrote to my dear mother, saying that I purposed going down in Georgia in order to look after our interests there. I left the army after the very severe fight we had with the enemy on the 27th of September. At one time things had a very ugly look; the Yanks, by stealing a march upon us, had got alarmingly near to the rebel capital, and had not our division come across the river in the nick of time at a double quick I think that the cerulean abdomens could have played havoc in the city, but I have no idea of their having been able to effect a lodgment there. We had a very exciting race with them for Fort Gilmore, one of the most important links in the chain of defences around Richmond, but fortunately the game and high-mettled rebs reached that goal before Butler's motley crowd of niggers and Dutchmen. Enraged at being thus headed off, the "beast" ordered a charge, as usual putting his sable soldiery in front of the storming party; they came up very gallantly to within thirty yards of our works. I was in the fort at the time, and could not help admiring this solid and compact column with its forest of bayonets glistening in the sun. I might then

have felt nervous and anxious about the ability of our little band of men to resist such a mighty host had I not felt unbounded confidence in their indomitable courage and steadiness. At the distance of some thirty yards we poured a deadly volley into their midst, and with a yell mounted the parapets; then occurred a *changement à vue* almost without a parallel in this bloody drama, the defiant mass breaking up into a disordered mob, and scattering like chaff before the wind. Some of the negroes, who, by-the-bye, behaved much better than the white troops, still kept advancing, and attempted with much intrepidity to scale the parapets; every one of them was either killed or taken prisoner in the attempt. Officers helped their men to shoot them down; my Adams' repeater acquitted itself very creditably on that occasion. The next day we had a brush with them again; in it my dear little horse was badly wounded in the neck and shoulder. He fell so suddenly that we all thought he was killed, but I am happy to say that Torpedo is himself again, thanks to the care bestowed upon him by a kind Virginian farmer in whose hands I left him. I don't know what I would have done had I lost him, for good chargers are terribly scarce in Dixie now-a-days. In my horseless condition, I applied for a permission to go to Richmond, and thence to Georgia. I stopped a few days in Richmond, and then set out for the south. After a long and tedious journey, I got to Tibeauville. The Cowpers and our genial neighbours on the wild Altama\* were very glad to see me, I found them squatting in a wild and barren forest of pine trees, but bearing their privations with that Mark Tapley-like buoyancy which characterises our brave people in this their fiery ordeal. They had to start from first principles, and went to work like pioneers in the far west, clearing lands and building up shanties. Mr. William Cowper has constructed a snug little house of pine boards, in it I assure you that I passed a fortnight very pleasantly; his ingenuity and untiring energy have, by this time, supplied many of

\*The Altamaha River.

the inconveniences of the times. Had not the crops for the past two years been very bad in that region of Georgia we would have raised amply sufficient to feed our negroes, but unfortunately owing to the shortness of the corn crop, we have been obliged to purchase provisions for our negroes. This, at present prices, is a heavy expense. With regard to clothing we get on famously, for we raise our own cotton and wool, we spin and weave it. These homespuns make very excellent negro clothing; I enclose herewith some samples that I think do credit to Mr. Cowper's factory. You will appreciate them the more when I tell you that he made the lathe which made the spinning and weaving machines which made these textures. On arriving, I was literally mobbed by the negroes, young and old, who seemed as pleased to see me as if this Abolition crusade had never been thought of. Mr. Cowper told me that they are as docile as ever, and that unless some extraordinary inducement was held out to them he thought that they would not run off. We have lost a few in that way, and quite a large number by sickness when they were removed into the interior. As there is no employment for the majority of them upon the place Mr. Cowper has hired out a good many to private individuals, who are bound to feed them well, but this winter, provided that Sherman's incursion does not knock this project on the head, we hope to get a Government contract, together with Dr. Troop, for the employment of our hands at very good prices. Our gangs will jointly be placed under the supervision of Mr. Cowper. I hope that this arrangement will be better for our darkies and more lucrative to us.

After a stay of a fortnight with the Cowpers I went to Savannah and saw Mr. Hodgson, who took me to the Georgia State Bank. I was there told by the cashier that the sum of two thousand dollars in Treasury bonds, bearing an interest of four-and-a-half per cent, was to your credit. This amount had accumulated there before Mr. Teft's death, and was made up of sums paid in liquidation of some of the notes due to you. At that time the Treasury notes,

in which these sums were paid, were as good as gold; it was only later that they began to topple down. On the 17th of February last an act was passed for the purpose of amending the currency; pursuant to it the holders of Treasury notes were obliged to invest at (in) four-and-a-half per cent. Treasury bonds at par, or submit to a discount of thirty-three and a third per cent. if the notes of the old issue were returned. Now, Mr. Cowper, being at that time your only representative on this side of the water, was advised to fund this sum, a course approved of by Hodgson as they are worth from 70 to 75 dollars in the hundred, and as, moreover, they are receivable in payment of taxes at present prices; supposing that we had taxes to the tune of five thousand dollars to pay, three thousand five hundred invested in treasury notes would meet that charge. Your Albany and Gulf railroad bonds are considered a safe thing; you have, I think, twenty-five thousand dollars invested in them. Well, Mr. Hodgson told me that if they were to be sold now they would fetch over one hundred thousand dollars. Since the death of Mr. Teft none of the interest on any of your securities has been collected, and the directors of the bank will not receive any payments in depreciated currency on your behalf, unless ordered by you to do so. When in Savannah I had the pleasure of seeing a great deal of your amiable friend Mr. Hodgson, who, together with his wife and her sister, were extremely kind to me.

I got back to Massa Robert's army the day before one of the prettiest affairs it has been my luck to witness. The whole of Butler's large army assaulted the lines occupied by Field's division on the north side of the James, between the Darbytown and Williamsburg roads. They attacked us in six lines of battle, but we soon disposed of them, and they fled, leaving their dead and wounded upon the field of battle. They lost in front of us not a man less than two thousand, whilst we had only thirty killed and wounded. Since the fight a formidable line of breastworks has been thrown up,



running from the Chickahominy to the James; it is by far the most formidable line of entrenchments our men have fought behind since this war has commenced, every resource and device of engineering skill having been bestowed upon it to make it impregnable. If it is carried by the Yankees I shall be much surprised at their dash, and much disappointed with our men. The army is in fine spirits; this lull of six weeks in active hostilities has done our veterans a great deal of good. It is also wonderful how the army has increased. I have no doubt that it is larger by twenty thousand men than it was last September; if we have no more fighting this year Lee's forces will be as large as they were at the beginning of this campaign. Our men are very comfortably lodged in snug log huts of their own construction, they are well fed and pretty warmly clad and shod—a shoeless rebel is not often seen now. Two of our brigades have built large log theatres, and in a few days will begin their performances, provided old Ulysses allows them to do so. The Texian *troupe* is really very good, and as good in its way as the famous Zouaves of Sebastopol. Until very lately I thought that we would subside quietly into winter quarters, but certain indications portend warm work somewhere in front. I have an idea that we on the left will not come in for it, but that Grant will try our centre, for that is the only point against which he has not butted his head since he sat down in front of Petersburg. But on the other hand, all this stir among the Yankees may only be a feint to divert our attention from Sherman, who seems to be going on vigorously with his work of desolation in Georgia. The Government is very reticent as to the measures taken to oppose him, and, as the telegraph is silent, his movements are shrouded in mystery; I think however, that Savannah, or some point between that city and Charleston, is the object of his grand raid. It is pretty generally thought that if he reaches the coast he will be in a very shattered condition; some sanguine people think that he will be gobbled up, but those who live will see.

Early's men have just come down from the Shenandoah Valley, they marched past this corps in the morning; our boys jeered them piteously for their discomfitures near Winchester. They were considerably nettled at this chaff, and at one time I thought a row was imminent between the two corps.

You express so much solicitude concerning my health that I feel bound to reassure you touching it. My health has been, thank heavens, very satisfactory, ever since I reached Confederate soil. The campaign has been pretty rough and fatiguing, it is true, but no ragged rebel has stood it half as well as I have done. My appetite is wolfish in the extreme, and I devour bacon which outranks General Lee himself with a voracity that would horrify the gourmets of the *Café Riche*. Now we are in clover, for the General has established his quarters at a farm, where we are really comfortably installed. The owners, when the Yankees advanced, fled to town, but their negro servants are still here and from them we get an abundance of milk and good butter, two luxuries which are highly prized in camp. I hope that we shall not be moved this winter, for if we remain in our present quarters I shall be able to see something of Richmond society; a visit now and then to the capital of the Confederacy will be a pleasant break in the monotony of camp life. In some of my preceding letters I asked you to send me several articles, the list of which I appended to them, but as it is uncertain if they have or ever will reach you, I must be forgiven if I bore you with a reiteration of the same request. First and foremost, I would like about eighty yards of Confederate gray cloth (I send a sample of the colour along with this), also four yards of *gros bleu* cloth, two of buff cloth, and a few yards of gold lace, nearly one inch wide; a couple also of felt hats would be most acceptable. I should also require a pair of cavalry boots, as my present ones are decidedly the worse for wear. A dozen bottles of Cognac, safely landed in Dixie, and forwarded to your son, would cheer the cockles of his heart; a little inward fortification of that sort is necessary

these frosty mornings when we have to ride along the picket line. Should you be able to squeeze in a few Chester cheeses, they would be not superfluous. I am ashamed to treat of such homely matters, but the fact is soldiers are as greedy as schoolboys, and the present petition reminds me of the happy days when I used to beg for plum cakes at Mr. Alfrey's. Before bringing my scrawl to a close, I must thank you, my divine mother, dear Bessie, dear Jean, and my bright little namesake, for their epistolary souvenirs of the month of August. As usual, I devoured them with a light heart. The photographs of the two noble little fellows are charming, and as is proper, vastly admired here. Adieu, my dear father, give my love to all the dear folks.

Your devoted son,

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HEADQUARTERS FIELD'S DIVISION,

ALLEN'S FARM,

DECEMBER 29TH, 1864.

My Dear Mother:

Opportunity being bald behind, I lose no time in grasping it eagerly by the forelock. An Englishman, who is about returning to the "tight little island," has kindly volunteered to bear this scrawl across the vasty deep. Conformably with the rule which I have laid down, of never missing the smallest chance of communing with you or some other of my dear correspondents, I have availed myself with pleasure of his offer. The missive which I entrusted to the care of Monsieur Tabonelle is doubtless near its destination, if it has not reached it by this time. I therein told my father to whom it was addressed, that my sanitary condition left nothing to be desired. Since then, that most satisfactory condition has not varied at all, and I am happy to say that I am still in a state of high preservation. At the time I was writing, I hugged the hope that all hostilities, as far as this army is concerned, were bottled up for the winter, but a change has come over the spirit of my dream, for

hardly had I handed the letter to its amiable bearer when we received marching orders, and I had to scamper off to get the division under way. On these occasions the post of aide is a dog's life and still more so at this season of the year, when the "Old Dominion" is one vast morass. It is not very jolly to have to leave one's cosy camp fire, and to flounder up to one's horse's girths in Virginia slush, than which the most vivid imagination cannot picture anything more atrocious. To cap the climax, you now and then run foul of a snag, lying treacherously hidden in mud and darkness across your path. This frequently entails a spill for both steed and rider; such was my luck on Saturday, the 11th ultimo, my only compensation for all these tribulations was to be savagely growled and scowled at by drowsy brigadiers who, having indulged in visions of repose, were terribly put out at being told to move out of the trenches with three days' cooked rations. The weather was as bad as it could be, a raw nor'wester scourged our faces, which were moreover battered by a fierce hail storm. This was not pleasant but it is all like war, and as Longstreet's orders were peremptory, when daylight began to struggle through the dull leaden clouds we sallied out of our works. The object of the movement was a reconnaissance in force, for the purpose of feeling the enemy's strength and position on the north side of the James. We splashed along through the mud and sleet, until we struck the enemy's pickets. A sharp little fight then ensued, but we soon drove the enemy back to their main line; in this engagement we captured a lot of prisoners and horses. I had also the good luck to take a prisoner, whom I eased of his sabre and also of a very fine water-proof coat, an article which I needed very badly, since my own had fallen into the hands of the cerulean abdomens.

After disposing thus of the enemy's outposts, we marched and countermarched until we came upon the Yankee line of works. These movements are very difficult of execution, as the country is densely wooded, the jungle at some places being so thick as to baf-



fle one's ingenuity in getting through it. These almost impenetrable forests, coupled with the tortuousness and rottenness of the roads have necessitated a departure from the old European system of warfare. Poor aides are invariably put to their wits' end in striving to get about to the different commands. Sometimes, such is the intricacy of the labyrinth in which they frequently find themselves, that before they are aware of it the enemy are all around them, and to their horror they discover that they are "turned round" and are riding bang into the opposite lines. Many of them have been gobbled up in that way. Having reached the Yankee line of battle, the General, his Adjutant, and myself rode on to reconnoitre the enemy, but owing to this horrible region we stumbled up against a party of the enemy's skirmishers, who upon seeing us blazed away at the party, and before we could see the fellows, Minies were singing around us rather spitefully. Under the circumstances the General rapidly came to the conclusion that discretion is the better part of valour, and so he wheeled round, stuck spurs into his horse, and skedaddled at a brisk pace; we followed suit, and after an exciting race, the danger was over. I drew a long breath, and congratulated myself sincerely upon having been missed. I then fully appreciated the feelings of the numerous rabbits which gave your muffish son the good-bye at LaBoulaye, so much to his disgust. If the report of this not over-glorious stampede ever reaches them, they and their persecuted brethren will exult over my discomfiture. We sent out scouts and sharpshooters to feel the enemy, and proceeded to make preparations preliminary to an attack, but our scouts on returning reported that the position was so strong a one that it could only be carried at a great sacrifice. Longstreet and General Field, after some consultation, decided to fall back, and not a little to their satisfaction our wet and weary soldiers turned their faces campward. This expedition, barring the number of men engaged, bore some likeness to that of the "King of France who, with twenty thousand men, marched up a hill, and then marched down again."

It was late when I got back to headquarters, and not in a condition calculated to excite envy, but a delightful surprise awaited me, for, thank God, on dismounting my faithful steed Sambo handed me your dear letter of the eleventh of October, enclosing Bessie's from Plassac; both of them acted as powerful restoratives on this broken-down reb. The sad tones which pervaded your lines I can well appreciate, for, wrapped up as is your heart in the cause, you must have been depressed by this deplorable tide of Confederate reverses. Since you wrote more misfortunes have fallen to our lot, and a heavy gloom hangs over the country. The situation is one of great gravity, and I frankly confess that it gives me more concern than I have ever felt hitherto; but, if drastic measures be resorted to, it is time yet to purge the country of its invaders. Floyd's defeat in Tennessee, Sherman's raid through Georgia, have necessitated the employment of very violent remedies. The most important of these, but a desperate one, it is true, is the armament of the negroes. Ever since I first landed in the Confederacy I have heard the subject discussed, and have been surprised to observe how many men are in favour of that last resort. Before this dark hour in the history of our revolution, the employment of the African element as soldiers was regarded by many far-seeing men in the army as one of the necessities which the vicissitudes of war might force upon us; they admitted that such an event was much to be deplored, and hoped that we should not have to withdraw "Cuffy" from his peaceful avocations in order to make food for powder of him. But misfortunes of late have come upon us, not as single spies but in battalions, and we shall have to play our last card in order to restore the numerical equilibrium in this unequal contest. One hundred thousand negroes, say even only fifty thousand, thrown into the Southern scale, would perhaps turn the war balance and enable us to achieve our independence. Is not the prize worth the hazard? I think so, most decidedly. For we know what Mr. Lincoln's programme is; he very candidly told

us that subjugation involves the manumission of our slaves, and in order to secure that end he runs them off and puts arms into their hands; he therefore not only takes them from us, but uses them as a means to crush us. Under the circumstances, would it not be better for us to say to the negroes, "Fight for us, and you will not only be free, but you will retain your homes; if you go over to the Yankees they will either force you into their ranks or leave you to starve in the inhospitable cities of the north." The negro's attachment to his home would operate as a powerful inducement to remain with us and join his fortunes with ours; this will be an evil I admit, but at any rate it will be the lesser of two evils—"If ills be necessary, then let us meet them like necessities." These opinions will doubtless startle you, and when I left you all I little thought that I would ever hold such views, but the necessities of the case have forced me to adopt them too. I still say and think that the negro's happiest condition is slavery. You have only to go over the country to convince you of that; he is infinitely better fed and clad than our poor soldiers; he leads an easy and regular life compared with the ragged rebels. When free, the inherent thriftlessness and indolence of the African will preponderate over his better qualities, and will destroy his usefulness. All that is very true, and from a humanitarian point of view I deprecate the abolition of slavery; but, to use an Americanism, we must let humanity slide for the nonce, and resort to every expedient for saving our national existence. That is the sole object of this struggle, we are fighting for dear life, for nationality. Four years of blood and carnage have made all other questions subordinate to that one great issue, independence; if we could maintain with it the maintenance of our servile institution, 'twould be better for the whites as well as for the blacks, but if not, let us sacrifice even that on the altar of our country. To get his ship afloat again many a sailor has had to pitch the valuable cargo overboard. The simile is applicable to us; a flood of disasters has driven our straining and struggling ship

upon those hated banks from which she fled four years ago; to lighten her slavery must be thrown overboard, or she may perhaps become the prey of the wreckers of Yankeedom. At the outset of this conflict, southern dash, individual courage and self-devotion made up for a multitude of wants and deficiencies; for instance, Jackson's shoeless little band of heroic ragamuffins, consisting of less than twelve thousand men, routed and drove away four huge armies, numbering at the very lowest an aggregate of one hundred thousand Yankees. But since then the Northern armies, which are as large as ever, have been better disciplined, and are certainly much better commanded. The Yankee generals of the present period are very superior to the Milroys, Popes and Burnsidés of the early part of the war, "*C'est en forgeant, qu'on devient forgeron*," says the Gallic adage, and the Yankees have been hammering away for such a time at their military improvements that at last they have put into the field armies that are much tougher than they used to be. I have seen how these northern fellows fight, and that at unpleasantly close quarters, I have witnessed their charges, and I have vivid recollections of a hot little charge against them. Well, after six months' campaigning, I am ocularly satisfied that the Yankees are not very easy to thrash. Such is the opinion of military men over here, who are not so prone to underrate the fighting of their opponents as those bombproof heroes who swagger about the lobbies of Congress, or the *Café du Grand Hotel*. Things have come to such a pass that we must resort to a desperate extremity, in order to counterbalance the increased efficiency and replenished ranks of the northern hosts. Did not the Russians in 1814, burn Moscow to save their country? The sacrifice was an awful one, but the French invaders reeled back shattered and disheartened. Let the abolition of slavery be the Moscow of the South, for if we arm the slaves we shall have to free them; we cannot, in this 19th century, make them fight in bondage like the Greeks did, and we cannot put a musket into their hands as we would a spade or a hoe.



I think that were the war to cease to-morrow, with all our constitutional rights recognized, the life of our peculiar institution would be a very precarious one. In the States where it flourished before the war, and where the occupation by the enemy has given it so severe a shock, it can never be re-established. The docility and the submissiveness of the darkies are very remarkable; I was struck with that at Tibeauville, but the vicinity of the Yankees leads to their demoralization and disorganization. Some remain on the plantation, others—and they are mostly the bone and sinew of the gangs—go over to the foe, this leaves upon the hands of the planter a residuum of old people and young children, which is utterly unproductive. Rather than bear this incubus he has to sell them, (and who would have them now)? or to let them take care of themselves. I am not an enthusiastic admirer of the negro; I don't believe, it is true, that he is endowed with those truculent instincts the humane Northerners counted upon, but on the other hand, I have come to the conclusion that he is treacherous and slippery; there are exceptions, but in point of numbers, a drop out of an ocean of disloyalty. But well-officered and disciplined, our darkies would, I am certain, prove as efficient in our hands as in those of the Yankees. But to obtain this degree of efficiency, the organization of that new material would have to be very perfect and very complete, for after all discipline is the great condition of success in war, and infinitely more effective than individual gallantry without cohesion.

Poor little mother, I have inflicted a terribly long repetition upon you, and it is not improbable that your prosy son would still be "pegging away" at the same subject, were it not for the providential arrival of two batches of letters which have just come to hand. The first one contains two missives: one of the 22nd of September, from Bessie; and another of the 29th, from my dear father: the other and more voluminous bundle comprised delectable communications of November 9th, from you, sweetest mother, and

from my dear sister Bessie. This envelope was a most acceptable box of wonders for to boot the "Reb." had the inexpressible felicity of reading Jean's and Henry's epistolary souvenirs. Tell my dear little namesake that his uncle is in ecstasies with his last pretty little letter to me, as well as with the picture of the Confederate flag. I know not which to extol the more, the scribe or the artist, he is certainly a budding Raphael. I was greatly delighted to learn in Jean's letter that Isabella's health was again in a satisfactory condition. It was a great relief to me, for I had felt very anxious about that dear one, ever since I heard of her sad accident. I hope before long to have another treat like the last one, which was really a royal New Year's gift for my father mentions on a scrap of paper, dated November 18th, that he had received my missives of August 26th and September 13th, and that they would soon be replied to. Awaiting good fortune I must "dry up," and with a thousand affectionate messages to your beloved circle I fondly kiss you, my dearest little mother.

CLEVELAND, VA.,

MAY 6TH, 1865.

My Dearest Mother:

Since that dark day of humiliation on which the commander of the once victorious Army of Northern Virginia avowed himself vanquished, and bade us lay down our arms and give ourselves up as prisoners of war to the generalissimo of our enemies—since then, dear mother, I have made every effort upon earth to communicate with you, but with what success I am almost afraid to conjecture, but out of the three missives that I despatched to you from time to time, through different channels, I trust that one at least has reached you. As it is only too possible that they may share the fate of many of their predecessors, I ought to give you their substance over again, which is decidedly of an egotistical character. Thanks to a merciful Providence, I have come out of this last calam-

itous campaign without what may be called a wound, and with my health, if possible, better than ever. Now that the din of battle is hushed, and the excitement of the fierce contest at an end, painful thoughts crowd upon me at every instant, for I cannot refrain from musing over the calamitous events of the past month, and from thinking of all the noble souls that I have seen fall around me. And yet their blood has been poured out in vain. But the anguish of these reflections is soothed a little by the gratitude with which my heart is overflowing for my Maker's divine protection of me, amid all the perils which surrounded all those that did their duty, up to the last scene of the bloody tragedy which has just closed. Grateful, indeed, ought I to feel that my life has been spared, and that ere long, if God permits it, I may fold you in my arms. I am sound in body, it is true, but sick at heart, for there is not a hope left us to cling to, nothing but flat despair. After the surrender I left the hateful place of our disgrace,—Appomattox Court House, with General Field and several of his friends, and at his invitation I accompanied him to the Northern Neck of Virginia, where his father-in-law, Mr. Royal Mason, resided. It is in the house of that most excellent and hospitable gentleman that I am at present inditing this letter; I have been staying here nearly three weeks. My motive for making so long a stay was to get across the Potomac into Maryland as soon as the blockade was raised, and thence to N. York, from which place I intended sailing back to Europe; but an order has been published by the powers that be forbidding all paroled prisoners from going North until further notice. I have therefore decided to go to Richmond, from whence I shall take shipping to Halifax, as transportation is furnished us by the Federal authorities to that point. I shall apprise you of all my movements from Richmond, whither I proceed to-morrow. If by remaining I think I can be of use to our interests in this section I shall do so, but in the present chaotic state of things there is, I fear, little prospect of my being able to do anything of permanent advantage. As

there is a chance of my soon giving the rein to my garrulity when we two meet again, I ought for the present to bridle my pen; were I not to see you before long, I would incontinently commence a narration of the trials, exploits and admirable endurance of our noble old division. Whilst other commands were melting by disorganization and desertion, Field's division was as full of fight, and as compact, as it was at the meridian of our glory. The darkest cloud has its silver edging, and it is a proud reflection, amid all this gloom, to know that our brave boys are as much respected by friend and foe as the Old Guard was at Waterloo.

Adieu, dearest mother, I beseech you to kiss all the dear ones for me a thousand times over.

Your devoted son,

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*FINIS*



